Hafa Adai!

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Finance to release $1.7M in retro payments for retirees. PAGE 5

USCIS issues reminder to employers of CW-1 workers. PAGE 6

Boy, 10, dies of COVID-19 in Guam

FIELD OF HEROES
TanHoldings and its charitable arm, the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, commemorated the 9/11 anniversary with the 5th Annual Field of Heroes event at the American Memorial Park, with each of the 500 flags planted in honor of all past and present community heroes.
NEIL FAMA

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

» CNMI logs 60th COVID-19 case

Guam recorded its youngest COVID-19 death yesterday when a 10-year-old boy with underlying health conditions passed away at the U.S. Naval Hospital, making him Guam's 26th COVID-19-related fatality so far. This comes on the heels of four other COVID-19-related fatalities in Guam over the weekend.

In the CNMI, its total number of positive cases of COVID-19 infections rose to 60 last Saturday when one traveler tested positive upon

See BOY on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Sept. 13, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	1,758	133	1,891
Recovered	1,037	81	1,118
Active	615	133	748
Deaths	21	5	26
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			43,169

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	59	1	60
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			14,375*

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted to not report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

Atalig sees frail economy until summer of 2021

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig projects the CNMI's financial situation to remain "a little gloomy" until the summer of 2021.

Atalig

Speaking at radio news briefing last Friday, Atalig was asked about his financial forecast six months or a year from now and he said the CNMI

See ATALIG on Page 4

Matson: Our colleague was not given respect

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Matson Inc. believes that the body of a crewmember who was found lifeless aboard a vessel on its way to Guam was not handled properly by CNMI authorities and was not shown the respect that Matson and his family expected.

According to Bernie Valencia, Matson's vice president and general manager for Guam and Micronesia, Matson made arrangements for the proper handling of the crewmember's body upon arrival on Saipan but things did not turn out as planned.

"Out of respect for our fallen crewmember, we made arrangements for the proper

See MATSON on Page 4

Guam suspends construction projects

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Health and Social Services in Guam ordered last Friday the suspension of all construction projects on the island after seeing a number of positive cases identified in a worker's barracks. The suspension will be in place until further notice.

Before this, most construction projects in both Guam and the CNMI had been minimally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with most construction projects continuing apace.

The Joint Information Center in Guam reported that construction companies in Guam were given advance notice before the issuance of the notice of suspension. The group of work-

See GUAM on Page 4

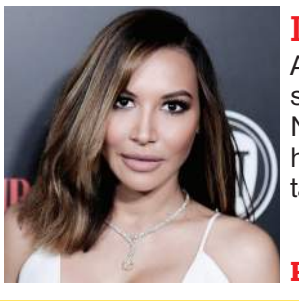
INSIDE

BUSINESS
Oteph's BBQ will be offering a new promo, "Payday Friday Bundle," starting Friday.

PAGE 11

NATION
Americans commemorated 9/11 on Friday in reconfigured and scaled-down ceremonies.

PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE
An autopsy report says "Glee" actor Naya Rivera called for help as she accidentally drowned.

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Local

New bill sets 14-day cutoff for absentee ballots

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REPORTER

Under a bill that the House of Representatives passed last week that suspends certain election laws for the Nov. 3 general elections, absentee ballots are allowed to be received and counted 14 days after election day as long as they are postmarked on or before the date of the election.

Rep. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan) said yesterday that this extension is in anticipation of delays in mail service in connection with COVID-19 and other challenges affecting the U.S. Postal Service.

"The extension has been done before, in the 2016 election, when there were problems in the printing of absentee ballots and concerns that mail delivery would be delayed as a result," Sablan said.

Other changes that they made in Senate Bill 21-68, SD2 HS1, is to authorize the Commonwealth Election Commission to begin collecting and processing absentee ballots seven days before election day, though the ballots will not actually be counted until election day.

Sablan said the processing of absentee ballots is time-consuming and a major source of delay in determining election results.

Also, Sablan said, instead of requiring five commissioners to be physically present to review and validate absentee ballots as is currently provided in the law, the legislation allows CEC to designate two people to collect and process absentee ballots in the presence of Office of the Public Auditor observers.

Provisions in this legislation will automatically expire after the November 2020 elections.

Under the bill, CEC's Sept. 19 target date to srtart early voting for Northern Islands will not push.

During discussions of the bill, Sablan said one of the changes that they're proposing in the bill is to allow early voting on Saipan and the Northern Islands to begin 21 days before the Nov. 3 election.

Sablan clarified the early voting schedule after Rep. Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero (R-Saipan) asked if CEC's "candidate's calendar" will be amended because it's confusing as it states that early voting for Northern Islands will start on Sept. 19.

Sablan said the feedback that they got was that the senators were fine with the proposed amendments.

The bill, which was introduced by Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan) and recently passed by the Senate, will adjust the early voting time and add more polling places. It will extend the hours of operations for early voting and election day.

The bill will give CEC the flexibility to make changes to the election procedures if necessary to mitigate the public health risks due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the bill that the House had just passed, the period for early voting by personal appearance on Saipan and the Northern Islands begins on the 21st day preceding an election and extends through the last day before election day up to 5pm.

For Rota and Tinian, the period of early voting by personal appearance begins on the 7th day preceding an election and extends through the last day before election day up to 5pm.

ROADSIDE WAVING
Employees of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services join the Tan Sui Lin Foundation, Saipan Mayor's Office, CNMI Census office, Department of Public Safety, and members of the community in a roadside waving at the San Jose intersection last Friday, Sept. 11, for the 19th commemoration of the 9/11 attacks. The event was organized by TanHoldings. NEIL FAMA

Navy trainings set

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Navy will conduct live fire exercises in Farallon de Medinilla and Warning Area 13 on the following dates and times:

- Sept. 14-15 from 8am to 8pm
- Sept. 18-19 from 8am to 8pm

Marine vessels are advised to remain clear of Farallon de Medinilla by 12 nautical miles for the duration of these events and to monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast Notice to Mariners for advisories.

The U.S. Navy will conduct live fire exercises in open ocean at the following coordinates: 13˚26"N/145˚08"E, 13˚42"N/144˚36"E on the following dates and times:

- Sept. 14 and 19 from 1-11:55pm
- Sept. 15 and 17 from 2-11pm

Marine vessels are advised to remain clear of the area for the duration of these events and to monitor the U.S. Coast Guard broadcast Notice to Mariners for advisories.

The U.S. Navy will also conduct training in the vicinity of Agat Bay and Outer Apra Harbor on the following dates and times:

- Sept. 14 and 19 from 1-11:55pm
- Sept. 15 and 17 from 2-11pm

Residents in surrounding areas are requested to remain clear of units in the area and should not be alarmed if they hear or see increased activity due to the training.

The U.S. Navy will conduct training in Dandan-Malojloj and Radio Barrigada on the following dates and times:

- Sept. 14 and 19 from 1-11:55pm
- Sept. 15 and 17 from 2-11pm

Residents in surrounding areas should not be alarmed if they hear or see increased activity due to the training.

These trainings support readiness and are critical to developing the skills needed to respond to operational missions throughout the region to ensure a stable, free, and open Indo-Pacific. ***(PR)***

ON ROTA SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY'S FINDINGS

Kilili expects many people to participate in public meeting

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) expects many to take part in this week's two-day virtual public meeting by the U.S. National Park Service when it will present its preliminary findings of the Rota Special Resource Study and accept comments from participants.

"Honoring our ancient Chamorro heritage is so important to us all," Sablan said.

Sablan noted that over 200 people took part in the initial public meetings when the park study began in 2017.

With the coming meetings, he said, the public has an opportunity to look at specific proposals and decide how the CNMI can best preserve ancient ancestral Chamorro sites for future generations.

The delegate said Rota's limestone forests will make a unique and excellent 58th addition to the 57 existing national parks in the nation.

The meeting will be on Zoom and will be recorded.

RELATED NEWS

Public invited to Rota SRS virtual public meeting. **PAGE 6**

NPS will hold the first virtual public meeting this Thursday, Sept. 17, from 9am to 11am, Chamorro Standard Time. The link is https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85655125375

The second virtual public meeting will be this Saturday, Sept. 19, from 9am to 11am, Chamorro Standard Time. The link is https://us02web.zom.us/j/86120394552

The National Park Service recently issued its preliminary findings that indicate Rota is a special place with significant cultural and natural resources, based on preliminary results of its special resource study, Chamorro archeological sites, World War II Japanese defensive sites, and limestone forests. The study finds the site suitable for inclusion in the national park system.

Sablan

NPS' special resource study of Rota was authorized by Congress in 2014, after four years of work by Sablan. In 2015, Sablan secured funding, prompting NPS to begin the study.

NPS' preliminary analysis also indicates that these sites would be conditionally feasible for inclusion in the NPS, requiring a partnership-based approach for management because of land ownership restrictions on Rota.

Based on these preliminary findings, NPS staff developed three alternative concepts for the preservation and public enjoyment of these sites including continuation of current management; Rota National Historical Park Concept; and Rota National Monument or Preserve Concept.

The first alternative is to continue the current management by the Commonwealth and Rota municipal government agencies.

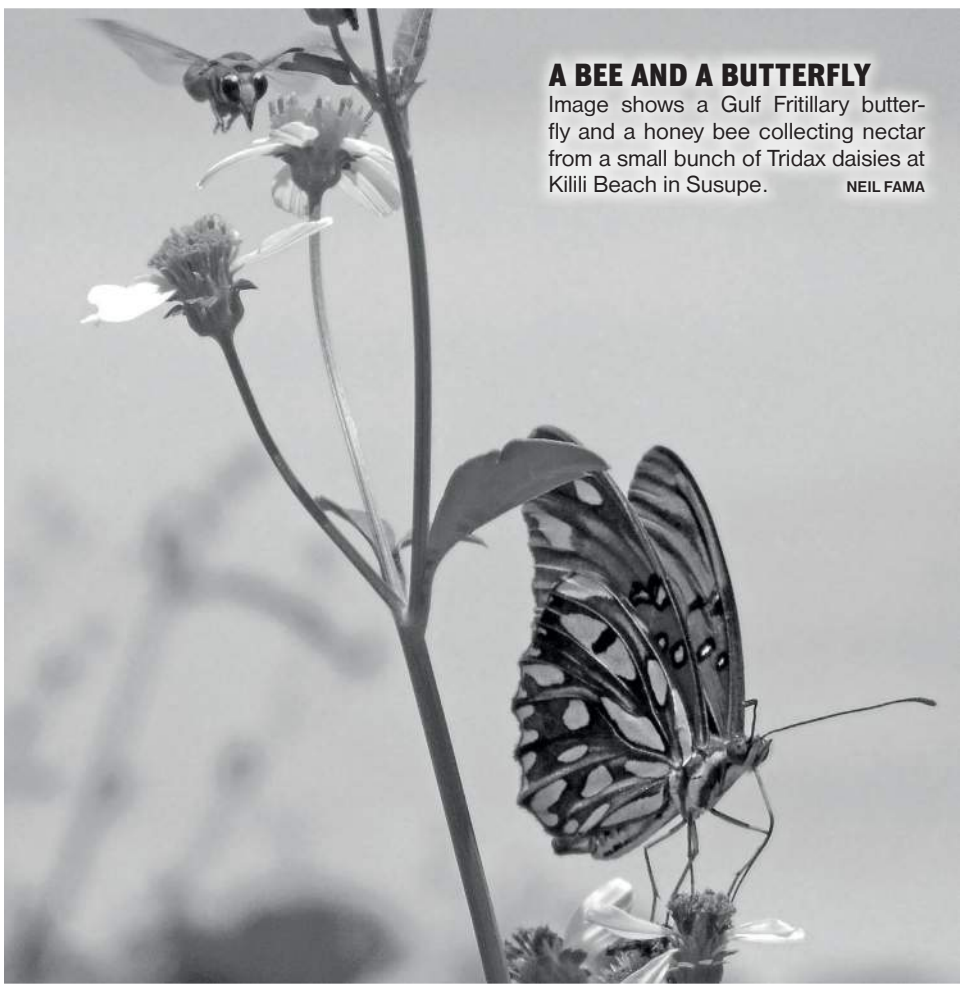
The second and third alternatives are for the CNMI and the Rota municipal governments to enter into a management agreement with NPS for a Chamorro National Historical Park (about 526 hectares), or for a Chamorro, limestone forest, and World War II sites National Historic Park (about 1,780 hectares).

Sablan said all lands would remain Commonwealth-owned, consistent with Article 12.

After the public makes its views known, NPS will send a final report to the Interior secretary, who will in turn transmit a recommendation to Congress. Only Congress can actually create a national park.

Sablan said a Rota National Park is an idea that started on Rota, when former senator Diego Songao suggested it to him, when Sablan was first elected in 2009 as a delegate.

Sablan said NPS' findings that a Rota National Historic Park is "both suitable and feasible" is a post-COVID-19 economic opportunity for the Marianas.



A BEE AND A BUTTERFLY
Image shows a Gulf Fritillary butterfly and a honey bee collecting nectar from a small bunch of Tridax daisies at Kilili Beach in Susupe. NEIL FAMA

Torres: United people reason for low COVID-19 cases

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The people of the CNMI are fighting together against COVID-19 and not with each other and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres believes that that explains why the CNMI has a low number of positive COVID-19 cases.

Speaking at last Friday's radio news briefing, Torres said everything that they have done since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic is to protect the people of the Commonwealth and that has resulted in "keeping the curve flat"—a term that means slowing the spread of the infection.

This is why Torres said he has thanked the community several times whenever he's on the media because of how the community has followed the emergency directives.

"Yes, we were strict. We're thinking…what is the best safe way to do to safeguard… the community," he said.

If everyone continues to work together and have one goal, then the CNMI will definitely flatten the curve, he added.

There are currently 60 positive cases of COVID-19 in the CNMI since March 28, 2020.

The governor said the CNMI was safe from January to February, until Guam posted its first COVID-19 case in March. Since then, he said, his administration, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muna, COVID-Task Force chief Warren Villagomez, Gerald Deleon Guerrero of Homeland Security, and others have worked many hours to keep the islands safe.

"We worked every day, up to even 2 o'clock in the morning and then would go home. And then at 5 o'clock, we were texting. What's going on? We need to do this. We need to do that. We need to order this," he said.

Like the rest of the world, they were scrambling then to obtain personal protective equipment—face masks, face shields, hazardous material suits, etc., Torres said, and what kind of ventilators they needed.

"It's important that our community knows that," Torres said.

The governor said people in the region are having a difficult time providing the very same care.

Torres said the Alternate Care Site at the Kanoa Resort has the needed equipment and supplies.

USCIS extends flexibility for responding to agency requests

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is extending the flexibilities it announced on March 30, 2020, to assist applicants, petitioners, and requestors who are responding to certain:

- Requests for Evidence;
- Continuations to Request Evidence (N-14);
- Notices of Intent to Deny;
- Notices of Intent to Revoke;
- Notices of Intent to Rescind and Notices of Intent to Terminate regional investment centers;
- Motions to Reopen an N-400 Pursuant to 8 CFR 335.5, Receipt of Derogatory Information After Grant;
- Filing date requirements for Form N-336, Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings (Under Section 336 of the INA); or
- Filing date requirements for Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion.

Notice/request/ decision issuance date

This flexibility applies to the above documents if the issuance date listed on the request, notice, or decision is between March 1, 2020, and Jan. 1, 2021, inclusive.

Response due date

USCIS will consider a response to the above requests and notices received within 60 calendar days after the response due date set in the request or notice before taking any action. Additionally, we will consider a Form N-336 or Form I-290B received up to 60 calendar days from the date of the decision before we take any action.

We are adopting several measures to protect our workforce and community and to minimize the immigration consequences for those seeking immigration benefits during this time.

USCIS will provide further updates as the situation develops and will continue to follow CDC guidance. Education and precautions are the strongest tools against COVID-19 infection. Visit uscis.gov/coronavirus for USCIS updates. ***(PR)***

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'What good is an iPad if I cannot go to work or pay for electricity?'

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

This was a question that Oleai Elementary School kindergarten teacher, Bertha Flores Orsini, repeated to the Board of Education at the BOE meeting last Sept. 11, from a parent who was concerned about how she will be able to not only provide care while her child goes to school, but also make sure that bills are paid.

During the public comments, Orsini stated that parents do not have to choose between keeping their child safe while also making sure their child gets quality education. They deserve both quality educations and a safe environment, she added, and that parents also deserve the right to choose between online learning or face-to-face. "The CNMI is probably the safest place in the world to have face-to-face education. Our private schools have already shown us that it can be done," said Orsini.

Orsini added that the only source for a brighter future are the "bright minds of our students." Additionally, because teachers have already been taught how to set desks 6 feet apart, the Public School System should allow kids to learn the same. Orsini stated that every teacher knows at least one teacher who has already bought a classroom set of face masks—"just in case."

Orsini said that teachers have been using the first week of school to contact parents and ask if they have internet, a form of technology that could be used for online learning. However, she believes that the "real question" that should've been asked is if parents want face-to-face or online classes.

"I called up parents in my roster, and I've been so moved by some of their stories. I heard a parent crying, because of the kids learning from home, we are depriving them of socializing with their peers," said Orsini. "One mom said, 'What good is an iPad if I cannot go to work or pay for electricity?' And then I think of all the [other] kids who call school home because their real houses do not have people who believe in them," she said.

Orsini expressed that nothing can come close to looking into a child's eye when you tell them that they can do; not even the "highest pixilated webcam" will do any justice. She pleaded with the BOE members to give every family the choice between face-to-face or online learning, not just for students who have special needs but for those who also call school their "home."

"As a teacher, I am trained to teach both because I know whether it is online or face-to-face, the students are going to love learning because they want to be there, because they were given a choice," said Orsini.

Jucutan request for early release granted

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has granted the request of former U.S Army Reserves member Jordan Jucutan for early release.

Last Thursday, District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted Jucutan's request for compassionate release.

In her order, Manglona also reduced Jucutan's sentence to time-served and ordered the U.S Bureau of Prison to release him within 48 hours of the order. She also ordered Jucutan to home quarantine for at least 14 days after his release.

All the other terms of Jucutan's original sentence remain in effect, including the imposition of three years of supervised release.

Manglona explained that the ongoing pandemic does not entitle every federal inmate to immediate release but the circumstance surrounding this case are exceptional. Taking Jucutan's case into consideration, Manglona said Jucutan is not a violent offender or someone in need of rehabilitation. Manglona added that the fraud Jucutan committed involved a relatively small dollar amount committed over the span of years.

"There are many individuals the court would not consider releasing into the community, pandemic notwithstanding. But Jucutan is not one of them," she said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Garth Backe asked the judge to reconsider her decision, but she denied his motion.

Jucutan, who is serving a 28-month prison sentence for wire fraud and aggravated identity theft, requested early release because his alleged underlying medical conditions—obesity and asthma—puts him at a high risk of contracting COVID-19.

Jucutan started serving his sentence on July 17, 2019, and with four months reduction for good time, he was supposed to be released on July 11, 2021.

Jucutan was convicted on the charge of engaging in a scheme to defraud the U.S. government and obtaining money falsely by claiming he referred nominees or potential soldiers to enlist in the Army Reserve through the AR-RAP program and received $2,000 for every nominee that enlisted and went through the training.

Jucutan said he recruited a total of 38 nominees. He signed a sworn affidavit admitting he "stole" the personal information of four nominees, entered their information into the Docupak webpage and received $9,000 for the nominations. Dokupak runs the AR-RAP program.

On May 26, 2016, a federal jury found Jucutan guilty of four counts of wire fraud and four counts of aggravated identity theft.

Jucutan was incarcerated at the Federal Correctional Institution in Sheridan, Oregon.

BOY

From Page 1

arrival on Saipan.

According to the Guam Joint Information Center, the latest fatality in Guam passed away on Saturday night at approximately 10pm (ChST). The 10-year-old boy tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 3, 2020.

"As your governor, I have made difficult announcements with each life we lose to COVID-19. With the passing of this 10-year-old boy, this is the hardest one I have had to make. This is news no parent ever wants to receive. He was just a child, with a full life ahead of him. There is no pain deeper than losing a child," said Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero. "To his family, friends, and everyone who loved and knew him, [first gentleman] Jeff [Cook], Lt. Gov. Josh [Tenorio], and I send our deepest condolences and sympathies. …With his passing, we are forced to see the reality that COVID-19 does not spare even the most innocent among us. None of us are immune to this virus, and we need to do whatever it takes to ensure we have no more days of grief."

In the CNMI's 60th positive case, the traveler was identified through travel screening and was confirmed positive upon arrival, according to a statement from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.. The individual was then taken to the designated government facility, which is the Kanoa Resort in Susupe.

CHCC has conducted a contact tracing for the most immediate contacts, which include passengers on the same flight, close family members, and friends.

COVID-19 in Guam

Guam reported its 22nd COVID-19-related death last Sept. 10. A 59-year-old male with comorbidities that were intensified by COVID-19. He was a known positive case and was admitted to Guam Memorial Hospital last Sept 8, and was pronounced dead at approximately 7:59pm on Sept. 12.

A day later, JIC reported Guam's 23rd death, a 95-year-old man who also had underlying health conditions. He was pronounced dead at approximately 3:20am last Sept. 11. Additionally, he was admitted to GMH last Aug. 29.

Within the same day, Guam saw its 24th death, a 91-year-old male who was battling multiple health conditions. The man was admitted to GMH last Aug. 26, and was pronounced dead last Sept. 11 at approximately 11:59pm.

Last Sept. 12, JIC reported Guam's 25th death, this time, a 58-year-old female who also had multiple health conditions. She was admitted to the Guam Regional Medical Center last Sept. 11 and was positive for COVID-19. She was then pronounced dead the next day at approximately 1:38pm.

"It seems our grief has no respite…" said Guam's Leon Guerrero. "…One of the most important things we can all do is check in with each other. Reach out to your loved ones, check in on them, and ask how they're doing. Though this pandemic has forced us to isolate, it does not mean we have to cope with this alone."

MATSON

From Page 1

handling of his remains upon arrival [on] Saipan. Mortuary professionals were waiting at the port with a hearse to receive our crewmember, but local authorities took control of the process and our colleague was not given the respect any of us would expect for a family member," he said.

Valencia did not elaborate on the mishandling but said they are working with CNMI authorities to release the body of the crewmember, a 59-year-old man who served as the ship's cook.

"We are working with local authorities to understand why this happened and to get our crewmember released so that we can resume the process of returning him to his family without delay," he said

Saipan Tribune learned from a source that the man's body is currently at the Commonwealth Health Center's morgue and awaiting an autopsy.

Saipan Tribune also tried to reach out to CHCC and the Department of Public Safety for a comment on the alleged mishandling but they had yet to release any statements as of 5:50pm yesterday.

Video footage circulating on social media last week showed DPS crime scene technicians loading a body bag, which they carried out of a refrigerated container at the Saipan port, into a nearby police truck.

According to a local news outlet on Guam, upon testing the body for COVID-19, test results came out negative.

The lack of a medical examiner in Guam following the retirement of Dr. Aurelio Espinola prompted the U.S. territory to send the body to Saipan for an autopsy

A source told *Saipan Tribune* that the crew member passed away in his sleep as the Matson ship was on its way to Guam from Palau. However, since there are no medical examiners in Guam, the body was shipped to Saipan for examination.

GUAM

From Page 1

ers of a Guam construction company tested positive for COVID-19 last Sept. 9.

Additionally, COVID-19 cases were also seen among employees of two other construction companies that were operating in Guam. According to the JIC, Guam's construction relies heavily on foreign labor and a great amount of the construction workforce are being housed in a mass setting, which have worksites throughout the island, including military installations, government of Guam projects, and private sector projects.

The JIC statement quotes DPHSS as saying that its immediate action was necessary to prevent further spread, which posed a "significant danger" to the public health of construction workers, industries associated with projects, and the larger community.

"DPHSS will undertake a review of all operational plans and conduct site visits of congregate settings to ensure applicable DPHSS Guidance is complied with and to safeguard the health of the construction sector's workforce," said JIC.

Additionally, DPHSS also recognizes that construction is critical for the island's infrastructure and the suspension of construction activities are to be limited in time. DPHSS informed businesses in Guam who are affected that in order for construction activities to resume quickly, they have to cooperate with DPHSS.

"Businesses that refuse to comply with this directive may be subject to fines and/or the termination of business licenses, as well as any other penalties as may be available under Guam law," said JIC. DPHSS enforced its directive with the assistance of the Guam Police Department, Guam Fire Department, and other regulatory agencies of the government of Guam, including the Department of Labor.

ATALIG

From Page 1

Senate is currently dealing with the CNMI budget for fiscal year 2021.

He said his current projection for revenue is about $144 million, which is $100 million less than what they expected to get when fiscal year 2020 started in October 2019.

"We projected to probably hit that as we see airlines and tourists not coming back," he said.

Atalig said they don't expect to see any turnaround in the economy until the summer of 2021. "With that in mind, our projections really are related to that," he said, adding that they won't see an increase in business gross revenue tax and hotel occupancy tax, as well wages and salaries. This means a lot of people will still be unemployed, he added.

He said they are hoping that programs like the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance will continue into the new fiscal year.

"So it is a little gloomy, per se, today," Atalig said.

Things can still change in the next six months, he said, as they're looking at revenues on a month-to-month basis.

He said any additional federal assistance will be helpful to the economy.

"The bottom line is that our health, our community is safe," he said as he underscored the need to use all current available resources to secure the necessary personal protective equipment and activities in order to keep the community safe.

Finance to release $1.7M in retro payments for retirees

The Department of Finance is set to release $1,735,837.71 in retroactive payments this week for retirees to cover payrolls on April 15, April 30, and May 15, 2020.

"We thank our retirees for their patience and understanding as our administration and our leadership in the Legislature worked very hard to ensure they are taken cared of for their years of service during this economic downturn. We have been for our retirees from the very beginning, and we continue to demonstrate that they remain a top priority," said Gov. Ralph DLG Torres last Thursday.

"This pandemic has impacted our economy and our way of life, but we will continue to do whatever it takes to take care of our retirees' full pensions for their public service. Gov. Torres and I thank our Legislature leadership and the Department of Finance for their collaboration and commitment to ensuring these payments to our retirees," said Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios.

"As the secretary of Finance, it has been a priority to work with the Settlement Fund to take care of our 2017 APGA debt to the Settlement Fund, which we did. This had to be done in order to be able to pay the retroactive payments owed to our retirees. We know this payment will help our retirees and their families, especially during this pandemic. Thanks to all the retirees for their patience," said Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig. ***(PR)***

NMI's 2020 Prevailing Wage Study now with USDOL

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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has already submitted the Department of Commerce's 2020 Prevailing Wage Study report to the U.S. Department of Labor last Aug. 18 for review and approval.

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s inquiries, Commerce Central Statistics Division Director Justin Andrew said Wednesday last week that U.S. Labor will publish the 2020 Prevailing Wage Study once they conclude their review and approve the survey results.

Rabauliman

Andrew said anyone can access and get a copy of the Prevailing Wage Study report once it is published on the U.S. Department of Labor's website. He said a link to the report has yet to be provided pending U.S. Labor's approval and publication.

The Prevailing Wage Study report is conducted annually to meet the requirements of the NMI U.S. Workforce Act of 2018. Its primary purpose is to determine the types of occupations that exist in the CNMI economy and to measure occupation-specific hourly wage rates for each of the occupations found.

"A recommendation is not required," Andrew said.

Speaking on behalf of Torres and his leadership team, Commerce Secretary Mark O. Rabauliman said he is thankful to their partners at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and all its members and the rest of the businesses and the public agencies that took time out of their busy schedules to provide data for this important report.

In preparation for next year's Prevailing Wage Study, Rabauliman is reaching out to those who were not able to complete the 2020 study and any newly formed businesses to log on to their data collection portal at cnmidata.commerce.gov.mp/ and register.

Commerce started collecting data for the 2020 report last June 11 and concluded last July 10.

According to Commerce earlier, preliminary results of the study show a response rate of 70%, with 713 businesses registered, 632 reporting over 15,000 total employees with 487 occupational titles recorded.

Andrew said it's very important that the survey gathers information from all CNMI businesses and employers to ensure that an hourly wage rate is derived from the maximum number of Occupational Titles available for employers when applying for CNMI-Only Transitional Worker (CW-1) visas.

Guam, Mariana islands to host Valiant Shield 2020

File photo shows the USS *Ronald Reagan* leading a formation of Carrier Strike Group 5 ships as U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy aircraft, led by a B-52 Stratofortress long-range bomber, pass overhead during Valiant Shield 2018.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii— U.S. Indo-Pacific Command forces are participating in exercise Valiant Shield, which starts today, Sept. 14, and will be held until Sept. 25, in Guam and around the Mariana Islands Range Complex.

Participants include USS *Ronald Reagan*, USS *America*, USS *New Orleans*, USS *Germantown* and multiple surface ships—approximately 100 aircraft and an estimated 11,000 personnel from the U.S. Navy, Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps.

Valiant Shield focuses on integration of training in a blue-water environment. This training enables real-world proficiency in sustaining joint forces through detecting, locating, tracking, and engaging units at sea, in the air, on land, and cyberspace in response to a range of mission areas.

"Exercises such as Valiant Shield allow U.S. forces the opportunity to integrate warfighting concepts such as all-domain strike group operations in a joint high-end warfare training environment to continuously improve joint lethality," said Rear Adm. Michael Boyle, director maritime operations, U.S. Pacific Fleet. "It is vitally important that we demonstrate to our allies and partners our strong commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

The participating forces will exercise a wide range of warfighting capabilities and demonstrate the inherent flexibility and capability of U.S. naval fleet operations and integration of joint forces. The range of capabilities include maritime security operations, anti-submarine and air-defense exercises, amphibious operations, and other elements of complex warfighting.

In coordination with military medical personnel and public health personnel, every aspect of Valiant Shield 2020 has been analyzed to ensure the appropriate mitigation measures are taken against COVID-19. The planning focused on protecting service members and their families; preventing the spread of the virus to U.S. forces, local residents, allies, or partners; and ensuring warfighting readiness in order to accomplish assigned missions.

The lessons learned from exercises like Valiant Shield assists U.S. forces in developing regional and global power projection capabilities by integrating warfighting concepts that provide a full range of options to succeed in defense of U.S. interests and those of its allies and partners around the world.

Valiant Shield is a series of military exercises that promote integration among joint forces. Each successive exercise builds on lessons learned from the previous training to enhance complementary capabilities and develop new tactics, techniques, and procedures. This training will provide the deterrence and stabilizing effects of a force-in-being, ready at the outset of a contingency, without the need for force buildup or extensive mission rehearsal.

This is the eighth exercise in the Valiant Shield series that began in 2006. ***(U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs)***

US, CNMI flags lowered to half-staff on 9/11

The U.S. and CNMI flags across the CNMI were lowered to half-staff last Friday, Sept. 11, 2020, in honor of the individuals, first responders, and military service members who lost their lives on Sept, 11, 2001

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres ordered the lowering of all flags across the CNMI last Sept. 11 in a proclamation he issued last Friday, on the heels of a similar directive from U.S. President Donald J. Trump.

An estimated 3,000 people died during the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

According to the proclamation he signed, "we join the nation in honoring our fallen Americans, and we encourage our community to visit the Field of Heroes at the American Memorial Park. Special appreciation to our private sector partners, most especially TanHoldings, and our government agencies for coming together to put on this event for our first responders.

"Our country and our lives changed forever that fateful day 19 years ago. As proud Americans, we remain in solidarity with the rest of the nation in honoring the brave first responders, fearless members of our military, and ordinary Americans who went beyond the call of duty to save others." ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Russian national dissatisfied with DHS action, sues

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Russian national is suing the U.S. Department of Homeland Security because he was dissatisfied with the action they took in his appeal.

Milan Fargo is suing DHS after he appealed the determination of the Office of the Inspector General in his Freedom of Information Act or FOIA request for access to records concerning documents from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which is under DHS.

The U.S. Department of Justice advised him to file a lawsuit in the district court if he is dissatisfied with the action in his appeal.

District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona Manglona granted Fargo's request to proceed with his lawsuit without paying fees and costs.

Manglona ordered the clerk of court to file Fargo's complaint, and directed the U.S. Marshals Service to serve DHS with the complaint.

In his complaint, Fargo said that DHS issued a humanitarian parole to him under the name of Nassir Nazarovich Kourbanov, which is Fargo's original name, last April 20-21, 2002. Fargo said it was given to his trustee and was faxed to the San Ysidro checkpoint, referring to a district in San Diego, immediately north of the U.S.-Mexico border.

On April 24, 2002, Fargo said the officer in charge confirmed that the copy of the parole was with their office, but she did not allow him to see the parole, saying that their computer was not able to find the files.

Fargo said the officer did not give him a copy of that parole, but, instead, handed him over to Border Patrol.

"I made my first FOIA request in the winter of 2002 sitting in an immigration center. Since then, I have made many, many efforts to have that parole with me, but DHS is not willing to let me," Fargo said.

Fargo said he tried to get a copy of the parole through DOJ's Office of the Inspector General but USCIS submitted a one-page document having nothing to do with that parole to the inspector general, prompting him to appeal OIG's determination.

Fargo previously sued DHS for allegedly hiding documents related to his humanitarian parole but Manglona ruled in favor of DHS.

ROBERT TENORIO TORRES
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e-mail: robert.torres@rttlawgroup.com

Via Hand Delivery/Posting/Publication

September 2, 2020

Hong Da Development Corporation
Attn: Sunny K. M. Chan
Caller Box AAA 39
Saipan, MP 96950

Re: Notice of Default and Breach and Demand to Cure

Dear Mr. Chan,

My office represents Ms. Bernadita Cabrera Palacios. Ms. Palacios is the Lessor and leaseholder of the following real property (hereinafter, the "Leased Premises"):

Lot No. 1849-1-6-1 located in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing a total area of 1,410 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2059/84, the original of which was registered with the Commonwealth Recorder as Document No. 84-749 on the 14th day of May 1984.

This is to notify you that Hong Da Development Corporation ("Hong Da") is in default of its Ground Lease Agreement (hereinafter the "Lease") of the Leased Premises that Hong Da executed with Ms. Palacios on January 8, 1991 for the term of 55-years, beginning on January 9, 1991 and ending on January 8, 2045, the monthly rent payments to be paid pursuant to the payment scheduled in the Lease. The Lease was recorded with the Commonwealth Recorder's Office on January 8, 1991 as File No. 91-175. Hong Da has breached the Lease by failing to timely pay rent in full.

In summary, Hong Da has failed to make any payments on the Lease pursuant the Lease's payment schedule since its execution. As such, Hong Da is in default for unpaid rental due and owing in the amount of **$456,494.00**.

Below is a breakdown of the amount now due and owing from Hong Da to Ms. Palacios:

January 1995 thru December 1995 at $1,000.00 per month (60 mos.).....$60,000.00

January 1996 thru December 2000 at $1,100.00 per month (60 mos.).....$66,000.00

January 2001 thru December 2005 at $1,210.00 per month (60 mos.).....$72,600.00

January 2006 thru December 2010 at $1,331.00 per month (60 mos.).....$79,860.00

January 2011 thru December 2015 at $1,464.10 per month (60 mos.).....$87,846.00

January 2016 thru August 2020 at $1,610.50 per month (56 mos.).....$90,188.00

TOTAL.....$456,494.00

Pursuant to Section 15(b) of the Lease, demand is hereby made upon Hong Da Development Corporation to cure the default amount of $456,494.00 completely within thirty days of receipt of this demand. Moreover, it is believed that Hong Da is no longer operational and has since been dissolved by virtue of an Administrative Dissolution. As such, if Hong Da fails to cure the default within thirty days of receipt of this notice, Ms. Palacios will declare this Lease terminated for Hong Da's failure to cure the breach. Upon termination of the Lease, you will be deemed a holdover tenant and my client will recover the Leased Premises in the manner provided in 2 CMC § 40206. Upon such termination, my client has authorized me to bring suit against you without further notice, for breach of contract and holdover removal, abandonment, and will seek damages for past due rent, and attorney's fees and costs for enforcement of the Lease, as set forth in Section 23 of the Lease and in 2 CMC § 40209. A copy of the Lease is hereto attached for your reference. Further, under 2 CMC § 40205, you will be held liable for double the amount of rent due on the Leased Premises for any period during which you refuse to surrender possession after termination of your lease.

All payment shall be made to my client in the form of a cashier's check, cash, or money order and delivered to my office within the period to cure the default as set forth herein.

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Any communication should be directed to my office.

Sincerely,

/s/_____
Robert T. Torres
Attorney for the Bernadita Cabrera Palacios

USCIS issues reminder to employers of CW-1 workers

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is reminding employers of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Transitional Workers, or CW-1, that they must confirm the continued employment of the CW-1 workers every six months.

USCIS created a new standalone form, Form I-129CWR, Semiannual Report for CW-1 Employers, for this requirement. USCIS established this requirement in an interim final rule implementing the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act of 2018. The IFR established that the semiannual report is required for all CW-1 petitions approved by USCIS with employment start dates in fiscal year 2020 for a validity period of six months or more.

For approved petitions with start dates from Oct. 1, 2019, through Dec. 18, 2019, CW-1 employers had until Aug. 17, 2020, to file Form I-129CWR as required in the IFR. On Sept. 1, USCIS began issuing Notices of Intent to Revoke for CW-1 employers who have not filed a required Form I-129CWR and are now overdue.

Employers can verify if USCIS received the Form I-129CWR by entering the receipt number of the approved Form I-129CW petition in Case Status Online.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

Public invited to Rota SRS virtual public meeting

The National Park Service is inviting the public to join park staff and planners to learn about and discuss the preliminary findings of the Rota Special Resource Study. Your thoughts and ideas are important to the study.

We are hosting two virtual meetings that will take place on Zoom. It is important to note that both meetings will be recorded, and will be available for people to stream and share with others afterwards.

Virtual meeting No. 1:

1. Chamorro Standard Time for the meeting is Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020, from 9am to 11am (ChST)
2. Pacific Daylight Time for the meeting is Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020, from 4pm to 6pm (PDT)
3. Eastern Daylight Time for the meeting is Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020, from 7pm to 9pm (EDT)
4. **Zoom Link:** https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85655125375

Virtual meeting No. 2:

1. Chamorro Standard Time for the meeting is Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020, from 9am to 11am (ChST)
2. Pacific Daylight Time for the meeting is Friday, Sept. 18, 2020, from 4pm to 6pm (PDT)
3. Eastern Daylight Time for the meeting is Friday, Sept. 18, 2020, from 7pm to 9pm (EDT).
4. **Zoom Link:** https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86120394552

Meeting directions/ instructions

Download the free Zoom desktop app or the free Zoom mobile app prior to the public meetings. No pre-registration is required.

If you join Zoom on a computer

Click the Rota SRS Virtual Public Zoom meeting link and it will take you to a page where you can either use the Zoom desktop app or the web browser.

■ If you already have the Zoom desktop app, click "Open Zoom Meetings" to join.

■ If you do not have the Zoom desktop app, click "Cancel" and then click "download and run Zoom" and follow the instructions on your screen.

■ If downloading the Zoom desktop app is not an option, click "Cancel." Click "launch meeting" at the bottom of the screen, click "Cancel" again, and finally the "join from your browser" link.

If you join Zoom on a mobile device

1. Make sure you have downloaded the app.
2. Have access to the Zoom meeting link on your mobile device.
3. Click on the link from your mobile device.

Accessibility

If you have concerns about internet connectivity, or prefer to use assistive technology, we will be uploading an accessible PDF of our Presentation Slides for you to follow along with. The slides will be located under the "Document List" page on our project site prior to the meetings.

To download the Rota Special Resource Study Newsletter, go to https://files.constantcontact.com/689bbc49001/84bd8cc5-ac29-4011-961f-7f4890cee9e0.pdf

For more information

■ Project Website: for details, updates, virtual meeting presentation slides, and to submit comments: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/rotastudy

■ Public meeting updates: https://www.facebook.com/americanmemorialpark

■ E-mail the study team: **Rota_study@nps.gov.** ***(PR)***

Defendant in Hillbroom case asks for cross-claims to be dismissed

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

One of the defendants that Junior Larry Hillbroom is suing in the District Court for the NMI has asked the court to dismiss cross-claims of his co-defendant in the case.

Hillbroom's former trustee, Keith Waibel, one of the defendants in the case, has asked the federal court to dismiss with prejudice the cross-claims of one of his co-defendants, Barry Israel.

He said the claim against him is "almost laughable as it is much ado about nothing and is a blatant attempt to use the court to bully him."

"Israel and his lawyer bullied me during my deposition. Conduct matters and Israel and his attorney have not behaved in this civil suit in a civil manner," he said.

Israel recently filed a motion for summary judgment for his cross-claims against Waibel for defamation. Israel asked the court to rule against Waibel and award him $1.4 million and punitive damages in the amount of $400,000.

In response, Waibel said he was never interviewed by any media about Israel or Lujan and even declined to comment and refused to cooperate with the book and the film regarding the death of Larry Lee Hillblom.

Waibel said Israel, however, spoke with the *New York Times*, the writers of a book, the producers of a film and chose to make himself a public figure.

"My comments, which never named Israel, were among, at most, four individuals; Paul Flanney (Mr. Hillbroom and my business partner at the time) Jan Vail (another partner who was secretly working for Israel) and myself. Assertion that there is a criminal in Vietnam was only made public by Israel himself and only identified at my deposition when asked who I meant," he said.

Israel and Lujan, who represented Hillbroom when he was a minor, secured $90 million from the Larry Lee Hillblom estate. When he became an adult, however, Hillbroom sued his former lawyers for malpractice and Waibel for conspiracy.

Hillbroom is one of the four DNA-proven heirs of DHL Corp. founder Larry Lee Hillblom who died in a plane crash in 1995 near Saipan, leaving behind an estate estimated at about $600 million.

The court will hear Israel's motion for summary judgment on Oct. 1 at 8:30am.

The court also vacated the jury trial scheduled for Oct. 27 and reset the trial for Dec. 1 at 10am.

Hillbroom sued his former attorneys, Lujan and Israel, and former trustee, Waibel, accusing them of conspiring to inflate their fees as his father's estate was undergoing probate.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC IFB 2020-011

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: October 15, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

NMHC Rota Field Office Rehabilitation

Project package will be available on September 14, 2020, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid conference will be held via video teleconferencing on September 22, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. through Zoom Video Communications. Bidders will be provided the video teleconferencing link on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab. Bidders are encouraged to email the Procurement Officer of their intent to participate in the pre-bid meeting. Failure to attend the Mandatory pre-bid conference will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Vinney Atalig-Hocog
Chairman,
NMHC Board of Directors

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC IFB 2020-012

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: October 15, 2020, 11:00 a.m.

NMHC Central Office Expansion

Project package will be available on September 14, 2020, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid conference will be held via video teleconferencing on September 22, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. through Zoom Video Communications. Bidders will be provided the video teleconferencing link on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab. Bidders are encouraged to email the Procurement Officer of their intent to participate in the pre-bid meeting. Failure to attend the Mandatory pre-bid conference will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Vinney Atalig-Hocog
Chairman,
NMHC Board of Directors

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: SERAFIN ANGUI AMIREZ, Decedent.	CIVIL ACTION NO. 20-0256 NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATRIX and NOTICE TO CREDITORS Date: December 3, 2020 Time: 10:00 am Judge: Joseph N. Camacho

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE SERAFIN ANGUI AMIREZ:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, Byung Soo Jun, has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters of Administration for the Estate of Serafin Angui Amirez and to appoint him as the Administrator. The attorney for Mr. Byung Soo Jun is Colin M. Thompson.

The hearing on the Petition for Letters of Administration and Appointment of Administrator is scheduled to be heard on December 3, 2020 at 10:00 am in the Guma' Hustisia Supreme Court Courtroom, Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

Any and all persons, creditors or entities having claims against Serafin Ramirez or his estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within **Sixty (60) days** of the first publication, or the claims will be barred. The first publication was on August 7, 2020 in the Saipan Tribune. The final day to file a claim is October 6, 2020. A copy of your claim should also be sent to:

THOMPSON LAW, LLC
2nd Floor J.E. Tenorio Building
PMB 917 Box 10001
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone (670)233-0777
Fax: (670)233-0776
Email: Cmtlaw@live.com

SO ORDERED this 9th day of September, 2020.

/s/ HON. JUDGE JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

WWII veteran assigned on Tinian visits Camp McCoy

Clarence and Thelma Suzuki of Fresno, Calif., look at World War II-era photos at the Fort McCoy History Center as part of a tour of the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area on Oct. 28, 2016, at Fort McCoy, Wis.
U.S. ARMY/SCOTT T. STURKOL

Clarence Suzuki tours one of the Fort McCoy, Wis., Commemorative Area buildings on Oct. 28, 2016.
U.S. ARMY/SCOTT T. STURKOL

Public affairs specialist Theresa Fitzgerald, right, gives a tour of one of the Fort McCoy, Wis., Commemorative Area buildings Oct. 28, 2016, to Thelma and Clarence Suzuki of Fresno, Calif.
U.S. ARMY/SCOTT T. STURKOL

By SCOTT STURKOL
FORT MCCOY PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Thelma and Clarence Suzuki tour the Fort McCoy, Wis., Commemorative Area on Oct. 28, 2016.
U.S. ARMY/SCOTT T. STURKOL

Clarence Suzuki tours one of the Fort McCoy, Wis., Commemorative Area buildings on Oct. 28, 2016.
U.S. ARMY/SCOTT T. STURKOL

Clarence Suzuki tours one of the Fort McCoy, Wis., Commemorative Area buildings on Oct. 28, 2016.
U.S. ARMY/SCOTT T. STURKOL

Clarence and Thelma Suzuki of Fresno, Calif., had wanted to visit "Camp McCoy" for decades to see the place the legendary 100th Infantry Battalion once trained.

Their visit became a reality on Oct. 28, 2016.

Both Clarence and Thelma grew up in Hawaii and were married there 71 years ago in 1949. Clarence, who was 91 during the visit, is a former Army sergeant who served for 30 months with the Military Intelligence Service in Japan and on the Northern Mariana island of Tinian during World War II.

He said they both heard about "Camp McCoy" from friends and family who had trained at the post in 1942-43 with the 100th Infantry Battalion — a Hawaii National Guard unit whose members were of Americans of Japanese ancestry, or Nissei.

The 100th fought in six campaigns in Italy and France during World War II and earned three Presidential Unit Citations. The 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team is recognized as one of the most-decorated units for its size and length of service in the history of the U.S. military.

In 2011, veterans of the 100th, 442nd, and MIS earned the Congressional Gold Medal for their service during the war. The medal, along with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, is considered the highest civilian award in the United States. "That was a real honor," Clarence said.

"We know it was a short time that the 100th was here [at Fort McCo]), but in Hawaii it's a big thing," Thelma said. "It seemed like everyone knew about McCoy. I would hear about it from my brother's friends."

Clarence added, "Because we always heard about Camp McCoy…[we] always wanted to visit but never had the chance."

The couple toured each of the Commemorative Area's five World War II-era buildings. The buildings are representative of the types found in the cantonment area when it was constructed in 1942 and include an administrative facility, dining facility, and barracks. The 100th Infantry Battalion was the first unit to train at the "new camp" after its inauguration on Aug. 30, 1942.

An Army Jeep on display in the administrative building sparked a memory for the couple.

"That's just like the Jeep that Clarence used to teach me how to drive in Hawaii," Thelma said. "It was a scary, mountainous road where we would practice."

"She had a lot of fun learning to drive on those roads, and she did have a lot of trouble parking that Jeep," Clarence said jokingly. "We had so much fun."

The Suzukis also viewed photos—some with people they knew from the 100th—while touring the Fort McCoy History Center. Clarence said he enjoyed everything he saw.

"I was very impressed," he said. "It was a real historic review for me. A lot of things I didn't know [about Fort McCoy] I saw for the first time, and I'm really impressed with this historic site."

Fort McCoy Public Affairs Specialist Theresa Fitzgerald, herself an Army veteran, said the visit was memorable. "It is always an honor to meet veterans from World War II," Fitzgerald said. "The Commemorative Area brings out their personal stories, and you learn so much from them as they reminisce about the 'good old days.' Hearing their stories also helps me in my job by allowing me to share their stories with other tour groups that come through here."

Learn more about Fort McCoy online at https://home.army.mil/mccoy, on Facebook by searching "ftmccoy," and on Twitter by searching "usagmccoy."

Clarence Suzuki tours one of the Fort McCoy, Wis., Commemorative Area buildings on Oct. 28, 2016.
U.S. ARMY/SCOTT T. STURKOL

Clarence and Thelma Suzuki of Fresno, Calif., look at World War II-era photos at the Fort McCoy History Center as part of a tour of the Fort McCoy Commemorative Area on Oct. 28, 2016, at Fort McCoy, Wis.
U.S. ARMY/SCOTT T. STURKOL

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-20-030

INSTALLATION OF GRANULAR ACTIVATED CARBON (GAC) FILTER FOR TEN (10) WELLS (W19-072)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Installation of Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) Filter for Ten (10) Wells in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new GAC filter, strainer, flow meter, installation of gate valve assembly, pressure gauges, air relief valve, pressure release valves, concrete pad and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **September 17, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-20-030, *Installation of Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) Filter for Ten (10) Wells"*,** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on October 06, 2020**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 21, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Technician, Senior via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXX, Issue No. 182

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EDITORIAL

America's problem right now? It's always us against them

Earlier this year, South African-born comedian Trevor Noah hit at the heart of a serious problem hurting America right now.

"Nuance doesn't sell as well in America," Noah said in an interview with CBS. "Nuance means you can't just take a stand and fight the other person. Nuance means we have to talk a little bit more. And until the American political system can find a way to represent the nuance that exists within America, you are going to create this false impression that there is This or That."

In a nation sharply divided by ideology, it is easier for many of us to embrace absolutes over nuances. Unfortunately, we do it at our national peril.

Political protest and debate are cherished and essential elements of a functioning democracy. A society that views nearly every issue as your team vs. my team is proving to be more and more difficult in an increasingly polarized nation.

And the list of polarizing issues is inexhaustible—masks and COVID-19; immigration policy; gun safety vs. gun owners' rights; and the increasingly dangerous perception that stridence for racial justice is the same as advocating racial violence or special preferences.

These aren't one and the same, and rhetoric that conflates issues distracts from dealing with the core of the problem, which in the case of protests are the issues that drove demonstrators to the streets.

Too often the political call for justice becomes a binary choice. On one side, the narrative is either you support the protests or you're against social justice. And, on the other side, the narrative is that protesters and those who would incite violence are the same.

Neither is right. Most people, including the majority of peaceful protesters, are against destroying property and resorting to violence. And, all of us should favor recognizing and respecting the civil rights of all people and the rights of people to peacefully protest for those rights.

Another example of this binary division can be found in a new Dallas Morning News/University of Texas at Tyler survey conducted in late August and early September. Just 15% of Democrats support deploying the military in response to protests, compared with 70% of Republicans. On the use of tear gas and rubber bullets against confrontational protesters, 26% of Democrats asked in the survey supported those tactics versus an overwhelming 82% of Republicans.

Common sense should tell us that there are few absolutes in life. To pretend so edges out what this nation needs the most at this time—critical reasoning and interpretation that leaves room to decipher complicated realities and reach solutions. However, when difficult situations are reduced to my right position and your wrong position, conflict and gridlock are inevitable since there is no leeway for a third way.

Failing to address the nuances of complex ideas enables reflexive groupthink. Instead of justice and progress, gridlock, frustration and incivility become the order of the day and reforming the system to better protect basic civil rights for all gets swept away in the chaos.

(c) 2020 *The Dallas Morning News*

With the eerie skies of climate change amid a pandemic, we're in a 'Twilight Zone' scenario of our own making

By KARIN KLEIN
Los Angeles Times

Karin Klein is a Los Angeles Times *editorial board member.*

The Bay Area wasn't in end times Wednesday. It only looked like it, with orange skies creating an eerie, perpetual dusk. Car headlights were still needed at high noon.

But even if this wasn't Gotterdammerung, the National Weather Service was certainly adding to the uncomfortable atmosphere.

"This is beyond the scope of our models so we rely on your reports!" NWS Bay Area tweeted.

And what exactly does that mean, a Twitter user asked.

"The models do not seem to be keeping up with the thick layer of smoke as far as temperature forecast data, visibility, etc.," the weather service responded. "We just have so much smoke over us right now. Yesterday the models were way off and we expect the same today" for afternoon temperatures.

In other words, the scope of Western wildfires had for the first time outstripped the experts' ability to predict—much as the COVID-19 pandemic has done. So we'd be forgiven for feeling as though things have gone terribly wrong again. They have, as a result of poor policy going back months in respect to the coronavirus and, in the case of wildfires, many years.

Oddly, despite the smoke and ash from wildfires in Oregon that were turning the streets yellow-orange, the air quality in the Bay Area was good Wednesday morning, and there wasn't even a whiff of smoky smell—for a while, at least. The smoke had risen far enough into the atmosphere that it was trapped above the famous marine layer that blankets San Francisco so much of the year. But that wouldn't last, the weather service said, as eventually gravity would exert itself on the ashes.

This began a series of responses from around the area, including reports of ash filtering through the air, accompanied by photos that made it look as though the neighborhoods of the region had been trapped in amber for all eternity. Thursday morning, the streets of San Francisco look less surreal—but in a way more scary as ash filled the air and blanketed streets.

Maybe Wednesday's "Twilight Zone" scenario was what we needed to make us realize in a visceral way how bad it's gotten. It's gone beyond just distant reports of lost structures and multiple deaths—at least eight people have died in the recent Western wildfires so far, and others had to be rescued when they were cut off by flames. The blazes are so big that they can blanket us with ash, hundreds of miles away, and color our daily lives with sepia light.

Climate change scientists have been warning us for years about exactly the scenario we have today: Wildfires in the West probably wouldn't be more numerous, or caused by anything different—lightning, arson, power lines or heedless people with pyrotechnics at a gender-reveal party. But they would be more catastrophic. There would be monsters among them. Monsters big enough to turn the Bay Area orange while we in Southern California were more of a sickly yellow.

That strange, colored light falls on a world distorted by the illness that surrounds us, a pandemic that limits our activities. Late Wednesday afternoon, my daughter and I went outside to view yet another salmon-colored sun in a yellow-gray sky. The street was empty, as it's been so often in recent months. People are out only when they need to be.

COVID-19 lockdowns showed us for a while how much lighter our traffic could be, how we could reduce nonessential air travel, and thus reduce air pollution and quit adding to the loads of greenhouse gases that change our climate ever more. We have an economy to get started again, but could we give some thought to how we might do that without a return to spending hours sitting on choked freeways while our cars continue to spew pollutants into the air that we have too often turned yellow—sometimes from smog, sometimes from catastrophic wildfire?

And so, while neither one has anything to do with the other, both catastrophes remind us how small we have made our planet. Our world economy is built on travel that spread the coronavirus and cause a pandemic. And our choice of transportation—fossil-fueled cars and airplanes—has contributed mightily to the climate change that has meant fires so big they can blanket parts of California with red and yellow air, and falling ash, even when they occur at a great distance. And the burning of all that land, in a sad cycle, contributed to the climate change we brought about in the first place.

‘It serves no one when sexual violence is minimized or politicized’

The following is a statement issued by the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence.

Dear survivors: We believe you. We are standing with you. We understand that recent news and the following reactions of the community have re-traumatized you. In the past few days, you have been questioned, judged, and silenced in ways that have been damaging to your healing and sense of self.

Whether you have reported or not, told someone or never told anyone about the sexual violence you endured, your trauma and pain are valid. It was not your fault. You deserve to be believed, supported and treated with dignity.

It serves no one to have the seriousness of sexual violence be minimized or politicized. Doing this does nothing to help victims or survivors, especially those who are children, nor does it help to end sexual violence in the CNMI and the rest of the world. We are appalled that there are those within our community who would use these harmful tactics to gain political momentum.

Survivors, we will continue to help our community understand that reporting sexual violence is not easy by any means and that their unconditional support is critical. We will continue to help our community understand that before we can encourage survivors to report, we need to create a culture that believes and support survivors and demands accountability for those causing harm.

Therefore, we support you and whatever decisions you make on reporting. It’s okay to seek justice for yourself that may look different from others. We support your healing journey, whatever that looks like.

We also support investigative parties moving forward with sexual assault, abuse and harassment cases in a way that is trauma-informed, and that respects and honors the agency of survivors whether they decide to come forward or not. We hope that this and the opinion that those in public office “should be held to a higher standard” means that the current administration will be actively taking a deeper look into other allegations against current and former officials.

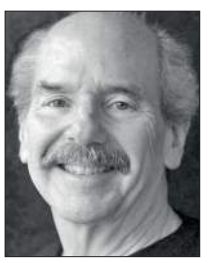
We call on our community to come together in support of survivors. A CNMI that is free of sexual violence requires that we all do what we can to create a community where everyone is expected to treat each other with respect and where children are protected.

And, again, dear survivors, we believe you. We support you. We will keep fighting for you.

With love and respect, the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence.

The greatest country on Earth?

By DANIEL ZWERDLING
Tribune News Service



Daniel Zwerdling, an independent journalist, was formerly senior investigative reporter for National Public Radio. He’s won the Peabody, duPont, Polk, Edward R. Murrow and most other major journalism awards.

At the recent Republican National Convention, President Donald Trump declared what most Americans grow up hearing: “America is the greatest and most exceptional nation in the history of the world.”

My wife and I heard these words while living in a distant land, where people see things differently.

We’ve come to Canada.

OK, Canada is not distant geographically; it’s next door. But Canadians’ worldviews are light years away. Their assessment of America is decidedly downbeat.

“America seems to be crumbling,” Jennie Orton, a technical writer with Canada’s construction industry, told me.

“America’s a dying empire,” said Mark Jan Vrem, an American who moved to Canada in the 1970s and became a TV executive and Canadian citizen. He shrugged good-naturedly. “Empires die. It happens to all of them.”

I spoke with these and other Canadians in July and August, in phone calls and socially distanced Vancouver coffee shops. They said they don’t dislike America, far from it.

“America was the most powerful nation on Earth,” said Richard Cavell, a professor of media studies at the University of British Columbia. “You had Moby Dick. You had Walt Whitman and Walt Disney. Who did we Canadians have?”

“We learned more about American history and society than we learned about Canada,” said Joe Gaudet, a software designer from Calgary. “I can still sing ‘I’m a bill on Capitol Hill,’” from “Schoolhouse Rock!,” the American children’s TV series that young Canadians had to watch about the States.

Every Canadian I’ve talked to is appalled by the U.S. health care system. Patricia Gruben, a filmmaker who grew up in Texas, married a Canadian and became a Canadian citizen in 2006, says her brother in the United States died last year. His daughters were left with $90,000 in medical bills even though he had insurance.

‘Under our government health care system,” she said, “we don’t pay.”

Canada is not a utopia. There is growing homelessness and a wrenching history of genocide and discrimination against their Indigenous populations. But people in the United States may want to look past their American exceptionalism at what Canada has accomplished:

Canada’s homicide rate is roughly one-third that of the U.S.

Canadians are healthier than Americans. The average U.S. life expectancy is around 79 years old, versus almost 83 years here.

Education? A California resident pays more than $13,000 per year in tuition to go to UCLA, which ranks No. 17 in an international analysis of the best colleges. Canadians can go to an equally great school for half that price at the University of Toronto, which is ranked No. 18.

Canada has more women in key government positions than all but five other nations; the U.S. ranks eighth from the bottom. And there’s far less income inequality in Canada than across the border.

Oh, did I forget to mention the pandemic? As of this writing, Canada’s accumulated coronavirus infection rate is less than 20% of America’s. A recent study at the University of Toronto and McGill University found widespread consensus among Canadian politicians, left and right, about the threat and how to fight it.

Canadians tell me they watch with stunned fascination as President Trump undermines key institutions, including the justice system, news media and federal government, while nobody seems capable of stopping him.

But “Trump didn’t cause your problems,” Orton said. “He’s the result of what’s been happening in the U.S. for many, many years.”

My wife and I are living in Canada on borrowed time. We have tourist visas. After six months, we’ll have to leave. We know we’ll feel torn. We love America. But Canadians have helped us see that, by many measures, it’s not the greatest country on Earth.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Election-year slander politics in the Marianas

For the sake of Rep. Edwin Propst, his family, and the thousands of voters who have supported him since his first election, let me cast a little historical background on election-year slander politics in the Marianas.

When Carl T.C. Gutierrez returned from a tour in the U.S. Air Force in 1969, Joe T. San Agustin, then-director of Administration for the Government of Guam, recognized his talent and convinced him to join the Democratic Party of Guam and run for senator. He did and won on his first try.

The *patron* leadership of the Republican Party then recognized the talent of this young, aggressive, grass-roots Chamorro, and began a slander campaign against him. They claimed Carl was a drug dealer, using his friends from Micronesia, who were also rising stars in their own political realms. Of course, the media reported the accusation. Not only was Carl re-elected, so were all his Micronesian associates.

Every election after that, the same Republicans made false accusations against Gutierrez to block his political rise, and the media duly reported them. He was not only re-elected; he was chosen Speaker of the Guam Legislature by a 14-7 Democratic Party majority—on the first ballot.

The accusations against Carl increased when he became a gubernatorial contender. In the end, he became the first grass-roots Chamorro governor of Guam; he became the first and only honorary citizen of Palau; and he was re-elected governor of Guam, receiving the distinction of being a consecutive two-term governor.

Ed Propst has become a thorn in the side of this Republican administration, which earned him the distinction of becoming the target of a slanderous attack less than two months before the general election. He, Daisy, and the kids need to understand that this unsubstantiated attack is nothing more than “loser’s tactics.” Ignore it, and go on with your lives.

Ed has done great work in the Legislature, and has much more to do. I would not be surprised to see him be the top vote-getter in the legislative election this year.

Keep up the good work, Ed. You are not a “Gutierrez” yet, but you might be!

Don A. Farrell
Marpo Heights, Tinian

Trumpty Dump ‘T’ Tweeter Tales

A sonnet trilogy, two caustic, one acrostic

What It Is Is Kangaroo Court Knots

Eight thousand lies from a genius so wise
the increasing of his suit pants waist size
and a tightening of facial muscles and jaw
nominating of Kavanaugh, Bully Barr at law
mondo bizarro comb over hair appearance
border separation of children from parents
appeal to Russia for interference with votes
calls facts and issues incomprehensible hoax
sycophants know for sure he won’t fire us
still lacks a national plan for the corona virus
penchant for placating, pandering to dictators
pathetic vocabulary less than most 4th graders
perfect model for a complete “loser” package
filled with constitutional damage and breakage.

No Four More! Por Favor, Señor!

Political partnership with Congress partisans
dirty politics in promotions and demotions
tweets filled with perfidy on a daily basis
often plays golf in a constipational stasis
negates career professionals in FBI and CIA
false pride, bragging, pouting day after day
temper tantrums, when questioned quite puerile
admires authoritarians, his dictator envy penile
pins the tail on his own dummy donkey mirror
focus on important issues never gets clearer
inexperienced appointees at his beck and call
panic attacks about Putin parties cause sweat
many pleasure trips via his Air Force One jet.

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY ‘PEPE BATBON’ CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey “Pepe Batbon” Connolly is a retired teacher and has been named a poet laureate of Tinian. He has taught English in CNMI public schools for the past 30 years. He has also taught in Alaska, New Orleans, and Las Vegas.

RNC to 45 Base – Fuggedaboutit!

(found discarded at airport campaign stop)

D. Daniels, Stormy got shut up checks from Mikey
O. Obama legacy obstruction offensive obvious
N. Narcissism: authority, self-absorbed, superiority
A. Absolute disregard for norms, diplomatic protocols
L. Leading a pack of liars from his own swamp
D. Delaying tax returns despite injunctions

J. Judges pressing for 45’s compliance with tax laws

T. Tweets policy nonsense night and day
R. Republican Senate sycophants march in step
U. Uses any conspiracy theory floated by Fox News
M.Makes the best of others personal peccadillos
P. Post office voting stumbling blocks in place

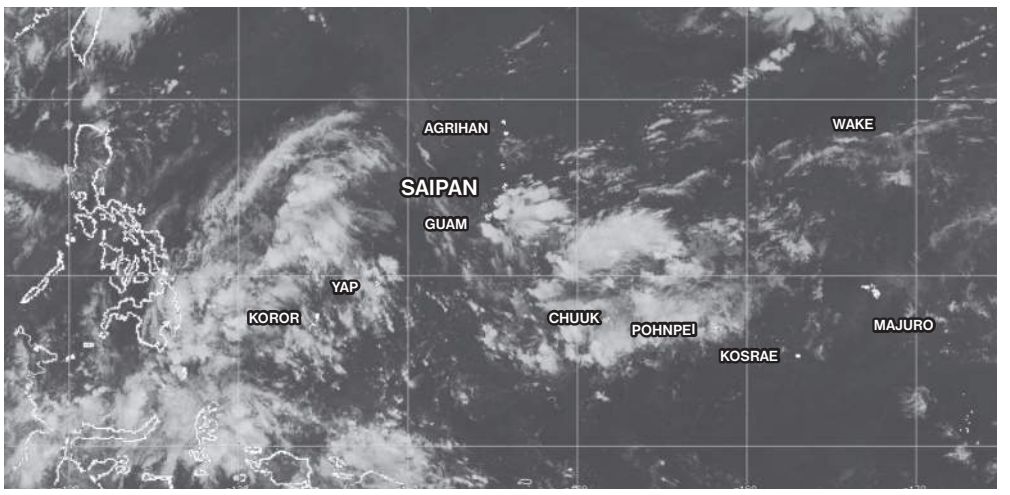
4 Four directions from Bigly Bad Boy to worse
5 Five steps closer to US constitutional chaos.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly sunny with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Light and variable winds becoming northeast around 10 mph in the afternoon.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.
89° / 78°	89° / 78°	89° / 78°	89° / 77°	89° / 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:28 AM, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Showers can be seen on radar moving into the region. Looking at the satellite, these showers are forming from a surface trough. Additionally, an upper-level trough is located near 16N148E and could provide a boost for convection that forms later today. Combined seas have continued to fall with buoys showing combined seas of 2 to

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 76°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 76°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:05 AM	6:19 PM
Tuesday	6:05 AM	6:18 PM
Wednesday	6:05 AM	6:17 PM
Thursday	6:05 AM	6:17 PM
Friday	6:05 AM	6:16 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:32 AM	3:52 PM	-
Tuesday	3:33 AM	4:44 PM	-
Wednesday	4:34 AM	5:33 PM	-
Thursday	5:35 AM	6:20 PM	-
Friday	6:36 AM	7:06 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Showers	57° / 52°
Beijing	Sunny	88° / 59°
Hong Kong	Showers	88° / 81°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	86° / 75°
London	Mostly Cloudy	63° / 48°
Los Angeles	Sunny	76° / 63°
Manila	Thunderstorms	88° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	55° / 43°
Miami	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
New York	Partly Cloudy	78° / 65°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	82° / 70°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	64° / 48°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	82° / 66°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	72° / 57°
Salem	Partly Cloudy	89° / 67°
San Francisco	Windy	66° / 55°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	79° / 63°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	82° / 68°
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	82° / 65°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:46 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.69
11:08 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.01
6:24 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.89
11:52 PM	LOW TIDE	1.15

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

DEPARTURES

GUM-MNL

UA183	7:30am	9:10pm	1 via Guam
UA183	7:30am	10:50pm	5 via Guam

Friday GUM-MNL will need THU overnight in GUM, so did not include in below.

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:30am	8:10am	1, 4
UA117	7:50am	8:30am	6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:30am	9:10pm	1 via Guam

ARRIVALS

MNL-GUM

UA184	10:45pm	4:25am+1	1 via Guam
UA184	11:45pm	5:33am+1	5 via Guam

Monday MNL-GUM will need TUE-WED overnight in GUM, so did not include in below.

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:50am	6:31am	1, 4
UA174	6:15am	6:56am	6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	11:45pm	6:56am+1	5 via Guam

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301.2	8:30AM	9:00AM	Tues/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Tues/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101.2	9:30AM	10:00AM	Tues/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Tues/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Oteph's BBQ will be offering "Payday Friday Bundle" for a mere $25 starting this Friday, Sept. 18.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Oteph's BBQ's pork sisig.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Oteph's BBQ's crispy pata.

Oteph's BBQ to offer 'Payday Friday Bundle'

A barbecue stand in Chalan Kanoa will be offering a new promotion starting this Friday that will certainly give budget-conscious large families something to think about.

Starting Sept.18, Oteph's BBQ will be launching "Payday Friday Bundle" for a mere $25. The promotion is a trio of the barbecue stand's bestselling food items. Bundle 1 will have whole chicken, tofu sisig, and 12 pieces of shanghai rolls. Bundle 2 is made up of whole chicken, tofu sisig, and 12 pieces of siomai.

Owner Michelle Olita said "Payday Friday Bundle" is their own way of thanking the patronage of their loyal customers. She also acknowledged that times are tough right now and the bundle meal could go a long way for large families wanting to celebrate on a tight budget.

The "Payday Friday Bundle" is also a way for Oteph's BBQ to welcome customers back as they only opened full-time last Sept. 7. Olita said they were forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic last April 1 and they remained shuttered until June 1. When they did reopen, it was still intermittent (three hours a day in August).

She said the pandemic really hit their small barbecue stand hard, especially after her husband, Jun, had to go off-island due to a medical emergency.

"It has had a big negative effect on our small business. It's a big challenge for us that we need to face in our daily lives. My husband stopped working and went home to the Philippines last February for medical reasons. The lockdown was then declared and he wasn't able to come back here to Saipan. Our small business is the only source of income to support and provide for our family's needs," said Olita.

Oteph's BBQ reopened last week with a revamped menu to keep in step with the changing times. "Due to the economic crisis brought by COVID-19, we revised our menu to avoid delay in our serving of orders. We continue to serve the ones that are fast-moving and we stopped serving the ones that are not really saleable."

Still on Oteph's BBQ's menu are liempo, shanghai roll, siomai, deep-fried whole chicken, sisig, chicken inasal, pork chop, slab baby ribs, lechon kawali, and crispy pata. They also occasionally roast pork belly lechon and have recently introduced pork and chicken asado siopao.

Like other food services in the time of COVID-19, the barbecue stand is strictly following safely guidelines set up by the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

"Our food services are limited to take-out and curbside pick-up. We also require 6 feet social distancing, customers are required to wear masks while picking up orders. We're also accepting orders via phone or in our Facebook page to avoid too much exposure and more risks. We are planning on setting up a delivery service also to lessen the risk for our customers and employees as well," said Olita.

For Oteph's BBQ staff, employees are required to do frequent handwashing before, during, and after preparing food. They're also told to wear masks, gloves, hairnet, and apron during working hours and to hand-sanitize often or between transactions.

Through thick and thin, Olita said Oteph's BBQ will continue to serve the local community with their grilled and non-grilled food favorites.

"Our team would like to thank our customers for giving us a wonderful opportunity to serve you. It is our desire to keep you satisfied with our services. You are our inspiration in doing our very best. We are very grateful for your continued patronage because we wouldn't be here without loyal customers like you. You could've chosen any other barbecue stall, but we appreciate that you are still supporting us," she said.

Oteph's BBQ is located along Francisco St. corner Lucia St. in Chalan Kanoa District 1 and it is open from 11am to 2pm and from 4pm to 9pm daily.

For advance orders and inquiries, call Olita at 488-0722 or 588-5509.

Oxford and AstraZeneca resume coronavirus vaccine trial

LONDON (AP)—Oxford University announced Saturday it was resuming a trial for a coronavirus vaccine it is developing with pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, a move that comes days after the study was suspended following a reported side-effect in a U.K. patient.

In a statement, the university confirmed the restart across all of its U.K. clinical trial sites after regulators gave the go-ahead following the pause on Sunday.

"The independent review process has concluded and following the recommendations of both the independent safety review committee and the U.K. regulator, the MHRA, the trials will recommence in the U.K.," it said.

The vaccine being developed by Oxford and AstraZeneca is widely perceived to be one of the strongest contenders among the dozens of coronavirus vaccines in various stages of testing around the world.

British Health Secretary Matt Hancock welcomed the restart, saying in a tweet that it was "good news for everyone" that the trial is "back up and running."

The university said in large trials such as this "it is expected that some participants will become unwell and every case must be carefully evaluated to ensure careful assessment of safety."

It said globally some 18,000 people have received its vaccine so far. Volunteers from some of the worst affected countries—Britain, Brazil, South Africa and the U.S.—are taking part in the trial.

Brazil's health regulator Anvisa on Saturday said it had approved the resumption of tests of the "Oxford vaccine" in the South American country after receiving official information from AstraZeneca.

Although Oxford would not disclose information about the patient's illness due to participant confidentiality, an AstraZeneca spokesman said earlier this week that a woman had developed severe neurological symptoms that prompted the pause. Specifically, the woman is said to have developed symptoms consistent with transverse myelitis, a rare inflammation of the spinal cord.

The university insisted that it is "committed to the safety of our participants and the highest standards of conduct in our studies and will continue to monitor safety closely."

Pauses in drug trials are commonplace and the temporary hold led to a sharp fall in AstraZeneca's share price following the announcement Tuesday.

The Oxford-AstraZeneca study had been previously stopped in July for several days after a participant developed neurological symptoms that turned out to be an undiagnosed case of multiple sclerosis that researchers said was unrelated to the vaccine.

US budget deficit hits record $3 trillion through 11 months

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. budget deficit hit an all-time high of $3 trillion for the first 11 months of this budget year, the Treasury Department said Friday.

The ocean of red ink is a product of the government's massive spending to try to cushion the impact of a coronavirus-fueled recession that has cost millions of jobs.

The deficit from October through August is more than double the previous 11-month record of $1.37 trillion set in 2009. At that time the government was spending large sums to get out of the Great Recession triggered by the 2008 financial crisis.

With one month to go in the 2020 budget year, which ends Sept. 30, the deficit could go even higher. The Congressional Budget Office is forecasting the deficit this year will hit a record $3.3 trillion.

While the government has sometimes run surpluses in September, Nancy Vanden Houten, an economist at Oxford Economist, predicted the September deficit would hit $200 billion, giving the country a deficit for this budget year of $3.2 trillion.

That would be well above last year's imbalance of $984 billion. The previous record deficit for a fiscal year was $1.4 trillion in 2009 in the aftermath of the financial crisis.

Congress has passed a series of relief bills totaling nearly $3 trillion that provided support such as a $600-a-week boost in unemployment benefits, up to $1,200 in payments to individuals and aid for small businesses trying to retain their workers.

However, many of the support programs ended in early August and efforts to approve another measure to restore the expired programs have so far failed in Congress. That has raised concerns among economists that with so many people still out of work and so many businesses struggling to reopen, the economic recovery could wither by late this year.

The deficit for August totaled $200 billion, matching the August 2019 deficit and reflecting the fact that with relief programs expiring, the gains in monthly government spending slowed.

The CBO is forecasting that by the end of this year, the amount of government debt will equal 98% of the total economy and then next year it will exceed 100% of gross domestic product, the economy's total output of goods and services. That's a level not seen since the huge government debt buildup in the 1940s to pay for fighting World War II.

Nation

US remembers 9/11, with virus altering familiar tributes

(AP PHOTO/JOHN MINCHILLO)
A mourner prays over the name cut-out of the deceased Emilio Pete Ortiz at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, Friday, Sept. 11, 2020, in New York. Americans will commemorate 9/11 with tributes that have been altered by coronavirus precautions and woven into the presidential campaign.

NEW YORK (AP)—Americans commemorated 9/11 on Friday as another national crisis, the coronavirus, reconfigured ceremonies and as a presidential campaign carved a path through the memorials.

In New York, victims' relatives gathered Friday morning for split-screen remembrances at the World Trade Center's Sept. 11 memorial plaza and on a nearby corner, set up by separate organizations that differed on balancing tradition with virus safety.

Standing on the plaza, with its serene waterfall pools and groves of trees, Jin Hee Cho said she couldn't erase the memory of the death of her younger sister, Kyung, in the 2001 terrorist attack that destroyed the trade center's twin towers.

"It's just hard to delete that in my mind. I understand there's all this, and I understand now that we have even COVID," said Cho, 55. "But I only feel the loss, the devastating loss of my flesh-and-blood sister."

Around the country, some communities canceled 9/11 ceremonies, while others went ahead, sometimes with modifications. The Pentagon's observance was so restricted that not even victims' families could attend, though small groups could visit its memorial later in the day.

On an anniversary that fell less than two months before the presidential election, President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden both headed for the Flight 93 National Memorial in the election battleground state of Pennsylvania—at different times of day.

Biden also attended the ceremony at ground zero in New York, exchanging a pandemic-conscious elbow bump with Vice President Mike Pence before the observance began.

In short, the 19th anniversary of the deadliest terror attack on U.S. soil was a complicated occasion in a maelstrom of a year, as the U.S. grapples with a pandemic, searches its soul over racial injustice and prepares to choose a leader to chart a path forward.

Still, families say it's important for the nation to pause and remember the hijacked-plane attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people at the trade center, at the Pentagon outside Washington and in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, on Sept. 11, 2001—shaping American policy, perceptions of safety, and daily life in places from airports to office buildings.

"People could say, 'Oh, 19 years.' But I'll always be doing something this day. It's history," said Annemarie D'Emic, who lost her brother Charles Heeran, a stock trader. She went to the alternative ceremony in New York, which kept up the longstanding tradition of in-person readers.

Speaking at the Pennsylvania memorial, Trump recalled how the plane's crew and passengers tried to storm the cockpit as the hijackers as headed for Washington.

"The heroes of Flight 93 are an everlasting reminder that no matter the danger, no matter the threat, no matter the odds, America will always rise up, stand tall, and fight back," the Republican president said.

Biden visited the memorial later Friday, laid a wreath and greeted relatives of victims including First Officer LeRoy Homer. Biden expressed his respect for those aboard Flight 93, saying sacrifices like theirs "mark the character of a country."

"This is a country that never, never, never, never, never, never gives up," he said.

At the Sept. 11 memorial in New York hours earlier, Biden offered condolences to victims' relatives including Amanda Barreto, 27, and 90-year-old Maria Fisher, empathizing with their loss of loved ones. Biden's first wife and their daughter died in a car crash, and his son Beau died of brain cancer.

Biden didn't speak at that ceremony, which customarily doesn't let politicians make remarks.

Pence went on to the separate ceremony, organized by the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation, where he read the Bible's 23rd Psalm. His wife, Karen, read a passage from the Book of Ecclesiastes.

"For the families of the lost and friends they left behind, I pray these ancient words will comfort your heart and others," said the vice president, drawing applause from the audience of hundreds.

Formed in honor of a firefighter killed on 9/11, the foundation felt in-person readers were crucial to the ceremony's emotional impact and could recite names while keeping a safe distance. By contrast, recorded names emanated from speakers placed around the memorial plaza. Leaders said they wanted to keep readers and listeners from clustering at a stage.

Smoke chokes West Coast as wildfire deaths keep climbing

SALEM, Ore. (AP)—Wildfire smoke that posed a health hazard to millions choked the West Coast on Saturday as firefighters battled deadly blazes that obliterated some towns and displaced tens of thousands of people, the latest in a series of calamities this year.

For people already enduring the coronavirus pandemic, the resulting economic fallout and political tensions evident in the Black Lives Matter protests and far-right counter protests, the fires added a new layer of misery.

"What's next? You have the protests, coronavirus pandemic, now the wildfires. What else can go wrong?" lamented Danielle Oliver, 40, of Happy Valley, southeast of Portland.

The death toll from the fires in California, Oregon and Washington stood at 31 and was expected to rise sharply. Most of the fatalities were in California and Oregon.

Oregon's emergency management director said officials were preparing for a possible "mass fatality event" if many more bodies turn up in the ash. And the state fire marshal resigned after abruptly being placed on administrative leave. The state police superintendent said the crisis demanded an urgent response that required a leadership change.

Oliver has an autoimmune disorder that makes her vulnerable to wildfire smoke, so she agreed to evacuate. She was nervous about going to a shelter because of the virus, but sleeping in a car with her husband, 15-year-daughter, two dogs and a cat was not a viable option.

The temperature checks and social distancing at the American Red Cross shelter helped put her mind at ease. Now the family waits, hoping their house will survive. She has previously experienced homelessness.

"I'm tired. I'm tired of starting all over. Getting everything, working for everything, then losing everything," she said.

Those who still had homes were not safe in them. A half-million Oregonians were under evacuation warnings or orders to leave. With air contamination levels at historic highs, people stuffed towels under door jambs to keep smoke out. Some even wore N95 masks in their own homes.

Some communities resembled the bombed-out cities of Europe after World War II, with buildings reduced to charred rubble piled atop blackened earth. Residents either managed to flee as the flames closed in, or perished.

Millicent Catarancuic's body was found near a car on her 5-acre property in Berry Creek, California. The flames came so quickly she did not have time to get out.

On Tuesday, she packed several of her dogs and cats in the car but later called her daughter to say she decided to stay. Firefighters had made progress battling the blaze. The wind was calm. The flames still seemed far away. Then they rushed onto the property.

"I feel like, maybe when they passed, they had an army of cats and dogs with her to help her through it," said her daughter, Holly Catarancuic.

Charlottesville removes Confederate statue near rally site

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP)—A crowd cheered Saturday as workers in Charlottesville removed a Confederate statue near the site of a violent white nationalist rally three years ago.

The removal of a bronze figure of a Confederate soldier known as "At Ready" is seen in Charlottesville as a milestone in eliminating divisive symbols of the Civil War.

The Washington Post reports that the process of removing the statue began Saturday morning as workers affixed straps to the 900-pound statute to prepare to remove it from its base.

A crowd of about 100 people cheered behind metal barricades as the figure was lifted from its pedestal and lowered to the ground. The statue has been outside the Albermarle County courthouse for 111 years.

Members of the crowd all wore masks amid the coronavirus pandemic. Some wore blue Union Civil War caps and danced to music broadcast by a local radio station.

The cheerful scene was in stark contrast to the violence at the Unite The Right rally on Aug. 12, 2017. One woman was killed and dozens were injured when a self-avowed white supremacist drove his car into a crowd of people protesting the white nationalist gathering.

"This is a magnificent moment," said local community organizer Don Gathers. "Much of the racial tension, strife and protest we're seeing across the country emanates from right here in Charlottesville. But now we're moving the needle in a positive way."

Albemarle County supervisors voted earlier this summer to take down the statute, which is located within the city of Charlottesville. The statue was not the focal point of the 2017 rally, but it is a block away from the statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee that white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups said they were defending in the clash.

Charlottesville's city council has voted to remove both Lee and a nearby monument to fellow Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, but a small group of Confederate supporters filed a lawsuit to save them. The case is headed to the Supreme Court of Virginia and could take months to be resolved.

Asia

India's cases cross 4.6M

NEW DELHI (AP)—India's confirmed coronavirus tally has crossed 4.6 million after a record surge of 97,570 new cases in 24 hours.

India on Saturday also reported another 1,201 deaths, taking total fatalities to 77,472.

Infections are growing faster in India than anywhere else in the world and it is the second worst-hit country behind the United States. Experts say India's limited and restrictive testing has masked the actual toll even as daily tests have been ramped up to more than 1 million.

The Health Ministry said that over three-fourth of reported COVID-19 cases had either recovered or been discharged. The country's recovery rate was at 77.7%.

"The gap between the percentage of recovered cases and active cases is progressively growing wide," the ministry said.

Meanwhile, cases in the western state of Maharashtra, home to financial capital Mumbai, have passed 1 million as the virus continues to surge unabated through its rural and urban areas.

Maharashtra is the worst affected state with more than 28,000 COVID-19 fatalities.

AP

A health worker takes a nasal swab sample to test for COVID-19 in Ahmedabad, India, Friday, Sept. 11, 2020.

Nowhere has been the virus more deadly than in Maharashtra, where it has killed 2.8% of those with confirmed infections, well above the national mortality rate of nearly 1.7%.

The pandemic has been economically devastating for India. Its economy contracted nearly 24% in the second quarter, the worst among the world's top economies.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

■ Australia's COVID-19 death toll has surpassed 800 after Victoria state reported six more deaths on Saturday and prepared to ease some of the tough restrictions. Victoria, the hardest-hit by a viral resurgence in the country, also reported 37 more cases in the past 24 hours. The national death toll stands at 803, with 716 of those in Victoria. It was Victoria's ninth consecutive day of fewer than triple-digit cases, meaning some areas of the state can move closer to easing restrictions on travel and lifestyle. State Premier Daniel Andrews says "we are poised to be able to take not just one, but potentially two, steps as early as next week." About 5 million Melbourne residents remain subject to a lockdown curfew between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m.

PH deports US Marine in transgender killing

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A U.S. Marine convicted of killing a Filipino transgender woman was deported Sunday after a presidential pardon cut short his detention in a case that renewed outrage over a pact governing American military presence in the Philippines.

Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton said in a farewell message that he was "extremely grateful" to President Rodrigo Duterte for pardoning him and expressed his "most sincere sympathy" to the family of Jennifer Laude, who he was convicted of killing in 2014 after finding out that she was a transgender in a motel northwest of Manila.

During his five-year confinement, Pemberton said he spent "much time contemplating the many errors" he committed the night Laude died. "He wishes he had the words to express the depth of his sorrow and regret," according to Pemberton's message, which was issued by his lawyer, Rowena Garcia-Flores.

Philippine immigration officers and American personnel escorted the 25-year-old Marine, who was in handcuffs and wearing a face mask, from his cell in the main military camp in metropolitan Manila to the airport, where he boarded a military aircraft. Ahead of the flight, he was subjected to a coronavirus test, which turned negative, immigration spokeswoman Dana Sandoval told The Associated Press.

The U.S. Embassy said "all legal proceedings in the case took place under Philippine jurisdiction and law" and that "Pemberton fulfilled his sentence as ordered by Philippine courts."

On Monday, Duterte granted an "absolute and unconditional pardon" to Pemberton in a move that caught many by surprise. The Philippine leader has long been a vocal critic of U.S. security policies while reaching out to China and Russia.

Duterte's pardon was condemned by left-wing and LGBTQ groups.

Debate has brewed whether the Marine, whose detention was arranged under the treaty allies' Visiting Forces Agreement, can be covered by a Philippine law that grants shorter jail terms to ordinary prisoners for good conduct.

The Regional Trial Court in Olongapo city, which handled Pemberton's case, ruled that the law covers Pemberton and ordered authorities on Sept. 1 to release him early for good conduct. But Laude's family and the Department of Justice separately appealed, blocking his early release from a maximum prison term of up to 10 years.

Duterte said he granted the pardon because Pemberton was not treated fairly after his early release, which he said the Marine may have deserved, was blocked.

The court order rekindled perceptions that American military personnel who run afoul of Philippine laws can get special treatment under the Visiting Forces Agreement, or VFA, which provides the legal terms for temporary visits by U.S. forces to the country for large-scale combat exercises.

Pemberton, an anti-tank missile operator from New Bedford, Massachusetts, was one of thousands of American and Philippine military personnel who participated in joint exercises in the country in 2014.

He and a few other Marines were on leave after the exercises and met Laude and her friends at a bar in Olongapo, a city known for its nightlife outside Subic Bay, a former U.S. Navy base.

World

Antarctica is still free of COVID-19

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—At this very moment a vast world exists that's free of the coronavirus, where people can mingle without masks and watch the pandemic unfold from thousands of miles away.

That world is Antarctica, the only continent without COVID-19. Now, as nearly 1,000 scientists and others who wintered over on the ice are seeing the sun for the first time in weeks or months, a global effort wants to make sure incoming colleagues don't bring the virus with them.

From the U.K.'s Rothera Research Station off the Antarctic peninsula that curls toward the tip of South America, field guide Rob Taylor described what it's like in "our safe little bubble."

In pre-coronavirus days, long-term isolation, self-reliance and psychological strain were the norm for Antarctic teams while the rest of the world saw their life as fascinatingly extreme.

How times have changed.

"In general, the freedoms afforded to us are more extensive than those in the U.K. at the height of lockdown," said Taylor, who arrived in October and has missed the pandemic entirely. "We can ski, socialize normally, run, use the gym, all within reason."

Like teams across Antarctica, including at the South Pole, Taylor and his 26 colleagues must be proficient in all sorts of tasks in a remote, communal environment with little room for error. They take turns cooking, make weather observations and "do a lot of sewing," he said.

Good internet connections mean they've watched closely as the pandemic circled the rest of the planet. Until this year, conversations with incoming colleagues focused on preparing the newcomers. Now the advice goes both ways.

"I'm sure there's a lot they can tell us that will help us adapt to the new way of things," Taylor said. "We haven't had any practice at social distancing yet!"

At New Zealand's Scott Base, rounds of mini-golf and a filmmaking competition with other Antarctic bases have been highlights of the Southern Hemisphere's winter, which ended for the Scott team when they spotted the sun last Friday. It had been away since April.

"I think there's a little bit of dissociation," Rory O'Connor, a doctor and the team's winter leader, said of watching the pandemic from afar. "You acknowledge it cerebrally, but I don't think we have fully factored in the emotional turmoil it must be causing."

His family in the U.K. still wouldn't trade places with him. "They can't understand why I came down here," he joked. "Months of darkness. Stuck inside with a small group of people. Where's the joy in that?"

O'Connor said they will be able to test for the virus once colleagues start arriving as soon as Monday, weeks late because a huge storm dumped 20-feet (6-meter) snowdrifts. Any virus case will spark a "red response level," he said, with activities stripped down to providing heating, water, power and food.

While COVID-19 has rattled some diplomatic ties, the 30 countries that make up the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs teamed up early to keep the virus out. Officials cited unique teamwork among the United States, China, Russia and others.

Italy shaken by brutal beating death of young Black man

ROME (AP) — Hundreds of people in Italy joined a funeral procession Saturday for a young Black man whose brutal beating death has shaken the country and drawn condemnation from the highest levels of the government.

Premier Giuseppe Conte and Italy's interior minister attended the funeral of 21-year-old Willy Monteiro Duarte, who was killed during a fight in Colleferro, a city on the outskirts of Rome, early Sept. 6.

Four Italians have been arrested, including two brothers with police records and a martial arts background, but to date prosecutors haven't indicated if the slaying was racially motivated.

Italian news reports have quoted witnesses as saying Monteiro Duarte, who was born in Rome to parents from the African island nation of Cape Verde, intervened while seeing a friend get beaten up in the fight and was then fatally beaten himself.

The slaying has struck a chord in a country that in recent months has shown a remarkable sense of common purpose in its bid to curb Italy's coronavirus outbreak. Carlo Verdelli, writing in Saturday's Corriere della Sera newspaper, said the beating was evidence of another Italy, an uglier one where indifference, hatred and anger are on the rise.

"Today's funeral for Willy is the funeral of a nation that doesn't know how to educate or protect its sons," Verdelli wrote.

While noting that a racial element hasn't been established, Verdelli said the slaying was evidence of a "hatred for those who are different, who come from the outside, who are fat, weak, female or handicapped, or who try to oppose the law of the survival of the fittest."

The funeral procession featured hundreds of people, most wearing white shirts and face masks, walking toward the sports stadium where Monteiro Duarte was being honored and then clapping in respect as his casket was carried out. It was a strong show of solidarity for the young man, an apprentice cook who has been described as hard-working and upstanding by those who knew him.

Photos of his smiling face have been plastered on Italian newspapers for days, alongside images of the suspects, including ones showing the tattooed brothers shirtless in boxing poses.

The slaying appears to have affected Conte on a visceral level: He phoned the family afterward to express his condolences and has demanded justice. Conte has also said that the slaying was not an isolated event and must not be minimized.

"We must look ourselves in the eye and become fully aware that there are some pockets of society and fringes of the population that cultivate the mythology of violence and oppression," Conte told the crowd after the funeral Saturday.

In a separate Facebook post, he asked what it means that someone could be killed in Italy for having tried to help a friend.

"Will we tell our children to look away? To not intervene to quell disputes or to try to protect weaker friends or friends in obvious difficulty?" Conte asked. "I don't think this can be the answer or the way forward. Rather, we must multiply our efforts in every location and context, so that our children grow up with the culture of respect for everyone."

Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

BEING FIT, LOSING WEIGHT IS A POWERFUL FORCE AGAINST COVID-19

BUT CITIES HAVE TO DO MORE

By JAYNE O'DONNELL
(TNS)

The annual ranking of the fittest U.S. cities, out today, tracks with some of the cities that weathered COVID-19 better — but the reverse is also often true.

The ranking underscores how cities can help or hinder residents' opportunities to be physically active, lose weight and avoid chronic conditions including diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, which increase the risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19.

The COVID-19 death rate for Arlington, Virginia, the nation's fittest city for the third year in a row, is 56 per 100,000 population. Like most of the other Washington, D.C. suburbs, Arlington had more cases per-capita than more rural parts of the state. Indiana's Marion County, which includes 94th-ranked Indianapolis, has the highest number of cases and deaths in the state.

"We know from research that physical activity can build a healthier immune system and overall wellness which help minimize harmful effects of illness and disease," said Barbara Ainsworth, chair of the American Fitness Index Advisory Board. "This pandemic shows the need to have local parks, trails and connected sidewalks in all neighborhoods that allow people to exercise safely."

While fitness can help individuals ward off some of the virus' most dangerous effects, other factors play a big role in how susceptible a city becomes. An area's public health messaging, social distancing, use of mass transit and average number of people in a household all play a part, said Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease physician.

Even though physical activity mitigates some of COVID-19's effect, "No matter how fit a city is, there are going to be populations that aren't fit," said Adalja, also a senior scholar at Johns Hopkins' Center for Health Security.

The index, co-sponsored by the American College of Sports Medicine and the Anthem Foundation, uses 33 health behaviors, chronic diseases and community infrastructure indicators to come up with scores that rank both the health of communities and those who live in them.

City leaders and planners need to enact policies and target funding to promote physical activity, better health and stronger communities, experts say.

That's especially true in cities with high populations of Blacks and Hispanics, as they have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, said NiCole Keith, ACSM's new presiden

"Covid's negative health outcomes come from diseases that are positively impacted by physical activity," said Keith. "If you give people a place to be active, the likelihood they will do it is higher."

Only one in four Americans meet national physical activity guidelines and more than 30 million have diagnosed heart disease, Ainsworth said, noting it should be of "national concern."

Sedentary lifestyles across the country cost more than $117 billion a year in health costs, said Ainsworth. The Fitness Index, she added, is a "prescription for communities to bring about positive change."

While there were many bright spots in the findings, researchers founds only 22% of adults in the 100 largest cities met the guidelines for both aerobic and strength activities. Adults need 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity activity, or

roughly 22 minutes per day, for substantial health benefits.

On more positive notes:

• All cities, In all 100 cities, residents exercised more, biked more, fewer smoked and there were more parks within a 10-minute walk this year compared to last.

• Big jumps. Some cities improved by at least 15 spots from 2019: Buffalo, New York (now No. 25); Toledo, Ohio (No. 81); and Anchorage, Alaska (No. 37).

• Charlotte. Even though it's ranked 67th, ACSM credits the work Charlotte's business and community leaders have done since 2013 to prioritize healthy eating, physical activity, and reducing tobacco use, all three Fitness Index indicators. The Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Department's chronic disease prevention efforts, which target physical activity, obesity, tobacco use, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes, were also cited.

• New Orleans. Mayor Mitch Landrieu set a goal for the city to be one of the ten-fittest in the U.S. The city's Fit NOLA strategic plan targets healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco use, among others. The city is currently ranked 50th.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS

Know how it spreads
The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
Clean your hands often
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
Avoid close contact
Stay home as much as possible and put distance between yourself and other people.
Cover your mouth and nose
Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others.
Cover coughs and sneezes
Remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
Clean and disinfect
Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases

Life & Style

Autopsy report: Naya Rivera called for help as she drowned

LOS ANGELES (AP)—An autopsy report released Friday says "Glee" actor Naya Rivera raised her arm and called for help as she accidentally drowned while boating with her 4-year-old son on a California lake.

Once his mother had helped him back on to the boat, the boy "noticed the decedent put her arm up in the air and yelled 'help,'" the report from the Ventura County Medical Examiner says. "The decedent then disappeared in to the water."

Authorities had previously said that Rivera had drowned accidentally after putting the boy, Josey Hollis Dorsey, back on the boat at Lake Piru northwest of Los Angeles on July 8, but had not mentioned her shouting for help.

Rivera "knew how to swim well," the report said.

The man who rented her the pontoon boat said she declined a life vest, but he put one aboard anyway.

Rivera

It revealed that the 33-year-old Rivera had previous problems with vertigo, had a recent sinus infection, and had a small amount of prescribed amphetamines in her system, but did not identify physical conditions or drugs as factors in her death.

Toxicology tests also showed she had small, therapeutic amounts of the anti-anxiety drug diazepam and the appetite suppressant phentermine in her system.

Josey, Rivera's son with her former husband, actor Ryan Dorsey, was found sleeping and alone on the drifting boat later that afternoon.

Five days later, her body was found floating in an area of the lake that is about 30 feet deep. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office said she was most likely trapped in thick vegetation underwater for several days before floating to the top.

Josey was immediately reunited with his father and other relatives.

The day before her death, Rivera tweeted a photo of the two of them that read, "just the two of us." In her memoir, she called him "my greatest success, and I will never do any better than him."

Rivera's death was the third of a major cast member of "Glee," the Fox TV musical comedy that Rivera starred in from 2009 to 2015, playing a singing and dancing lesbian cheerleader.

Rivera's body was found seven years to the day after co-star Cory Monteith died at 31 from a toxic mix of alcohol and heroin.

Another co-star, Mark Salling, who Rivera dated at one point, killed himself in 2018 at age 35 after pleading guilty to child pornography charges.

George R.R. Martin can't build castle library in New Mexico

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP)—"Game of Thrones" author George R.R. Martin won't be able to build a seven-sided, castle-style library at his compound in Santa Fe that drew objections from neighbors.

Martin

The city's Historic Districts Review Board on Tuesday denied a request to allow Martin to exceed the building height limit in the historic district where he lives, the Santa Fe New Mexican reported. The project included a roof deck and an elevator tower.

"It is a medieval castle, and I don't understand how we could possibly approve it in this style," board member Frank Katz said.

Mark Graham lives south of the property and said residents couldn't "support having a castle in the neighborhood."

"With the notoriety of Mr. Martin and 'Game of Thrones,' we absolutely fear that our neighborhood will become the next treasure hunt, that his fans will be looking to find the castle that's in the middle of Santa Fe," Graham said.

Officials also denied a similar proposal early this year, saying the project didn't meet height and style standards and didn't fit in with the character of the historic district.

'Avengers' and 'Game of Thrones' star Diana Rigg dies at 82

LONDON (AP)—Diana Rigg, a commanding British actress whose career stretched from iconic 1960s spy series "The Avengers" to fantasy juggernaut "Game of Thrones," has died. She was 82.

Rigg's agent, Simon Beresford, said she died Thursday morning at home with her family. Daughter Rachael Stirling said she died of cancer that was diagnosed in March.

Rigg "spent her last months joyfully reflecting on her extraordinary life, full of love, laughter and a deep pride in her profession. I will miss her beyond words," Stirling said.

Rigg starred in "The Avengers" as secret agent Emma Peel alongside Patrick Macnee's bowler-hatted John Steed. The pair were an impeccably dressed duo who fought villains and traded quips in a show whose mix of adventure and humor was enduringly influential.

Rigg also starred in 1969 James Bond thriller "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" as Tracy di Vicenzo, the only woman ever to marry, albeit briefly, Agent 007. Bond producers Michael G Wilson and Barbara Broccoli said Rigg was "much beloved by Bond fans for her memorable performance."

HBO VIA AP

This image released by HBO shows Diana Rigg as Olenna Tyrell in a scene from "Game of Thrones."

George Lazenby, who made his only appearance as Bond in the film, said on Instagram that he was "so sad to hear of the death of Diana Rigg. She undoubtedly raised my acting game when we made On Her Majesty's Secret Service together in 1968-9."

Chloe Zhao's "Nomadland" wins top prize at Venice Film Fest

VENICE, Italy (AP)—Chloe Zhao's "Nomadland," a recession-era road trip drama starring Frances McDormand, won the Golden Lion for best film Saturday at a slimmed-down Venice Film Festival, which was held against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic.

Zhao and McDormand appeared by video from the United States to accept the award, given virus-related travel restrictions made reaching the Lido in the Italian lagoon city difficult if not impossible for many Hollywood filmmakers and actors.

"Thank you so much for letting us come to your festival in this weird, weird world and way!" McDormand told the masked audience as the Italian marketing team for the film actually accepted the award. "But we're really glad you let us come! And we'll see you down the road!"

A favorite going into the awards season, "Nomadland" is screening at all the major fall film festivals in a pandemic-forged alliance involving the Venice, Toronto, New York and Telluride festivals.

Britain's Vanessa Kirby won best lead actress for "Pieces of a Woman," a harrowing drama about the emotional fallout on a couple after their baby dies during a home birth. Italy's Pierfrancesco Fabino won best lead actor for "Padrenostro," (Our Father), an Italian coming-of-age story that takes place after a terrorist attack in the 1970s.

Retail workers endure unfair abuse from angry customers

DEAR ABBY: I'm considered an essential employee during this pandemic. I am writing on behalf of myself and all retail workers.

First let me say that it is my pleasure to serve on the front line. We are all a little apprehensive, but we feel we are called to help.

Our problem: A lot of shoppers coming into our stores are extremely rude to us. They are angry when they encounter longer lines and waiting times. One customer actually spit on a plexiglass shield we put up to protect our cashiers. They also bring small children and babies in with them to shop.

We have been cursed at and yelled at for reasons beyond our control. Please let the public know we are trying our best to serve them even though a lot of us are afraid for our health and the health of our families. My daughter is a nurse, and she has experienced some of the same things.

IN THIS TOGETHER

DEAR IN THIS: Your letter carries an important message. There is no excuse for the abuse you have described. Fear, stress and extended isolation have brought out the worst in some of us.

I don't offer this in an attempt to excuse unacceptable behavior, but the customers you describe appear to be so upset and on edge that they can no longer control their emotions. Yes—some of them are also entitled, impatient and arrogant. Personally, I think that when a customer acts out, the store manager should step in and remove that person from the premises. Some stores have increased their security staff to deal with this. If enough managers did this, customers would be put on notice that bad behavior won't be tolerated.

P.S. As to mothers with babies and small children who are unable to arrange for child care while they shop, try to cut them some slack because they may be doing it because they have no other choice.

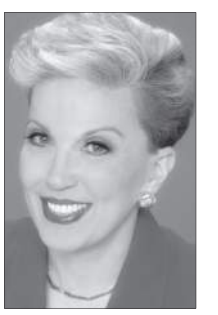
DEAR ABBY: My situation concerns my significant other's 18-year-old daughter. I have been dating (now living with) "Frank" for two years. I have been a big help to him. With a healthy diet and loving care, I have helped him to lose more than 50 pounds, which got him off insulin that we were paying $250 every 10 days for.

I have always been nice to his daughter, "Franny," on the rare occasions I have been around her. I wasn't in the picture when her parents divorced. Frank's family, i.e. sister and son, have accepted me, and his sister tells me often how much she loves me and appreciates all I have done for her brother.

Franny, on the other hand, refuses to visit him or even call him "unless he gets rid of me." He loves me, but I worry this is breaking his heart. He naturally loves his daughter.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

The reason she says she hates me is, I'm older than he is—actually, quite a bit older. Should I approach her to talk about it, or should I just leave things as they are?

"OLD" GAL IN THE SOUTH

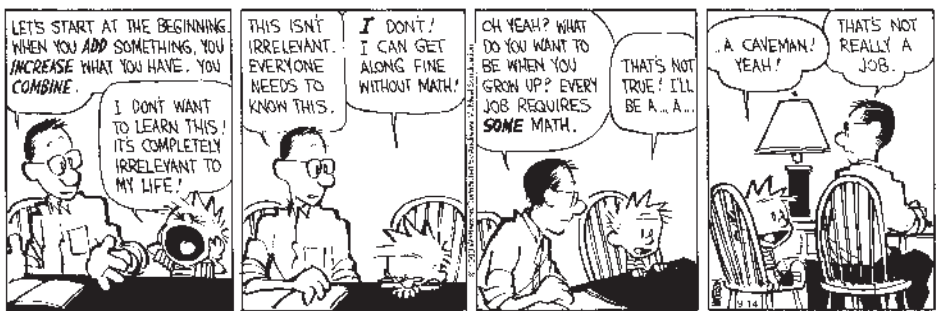
DEAR GAL: You are not responsible for Frank's pain or his daughter's attempts at emotional blackmail. Leave things as they are. The person to talk some sense into Franny is her father, not you.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING. WHEN YOU ADD SOMETHING, YOU INCREASE WHAT YOU HAVE. YOU COMBINE.
I DON'T WANT TO LEARN THIS! IT'S COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT TO MY LIFE!
THIS ISN'T IRRELEVANT. EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW THIS.
I DON'T! I CAN GET ALONG FINE WITHOUT MATH!
OH YEAH? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP? EVERY JOB REQUIRES SOME MATH.
THAT'S NOT TRUE! I'LL BE A... A...
A CAVEMAN! YEAH!
THAT'S NOT REALLY A JOB.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

DAD, I... THIS IS WEIRD, BUT...
LATE LAST NIGHT, I HEARD SCRAPING IN THE DRIVEWAY.
I LOOKED OUT, AND I THINK I SAW SASQUATCH.
WAS HE TAKING OUT TRASH IN HIS BOXERS?
YOU SAW HIM, TOO??

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

WANT TO BUY A SWEET '72 CAMARO WITH FOUR ON THE FLOOR AND A HOLLEY CARB?
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THIN MINTS?
I'M NEVER GOING TO MAKE AMBASSADOR SELLING COOKIES AT 5 BUCKS A POP!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Section
5 Evening hrs.
8 Smack a baseball
12 "Glass half full" type
14 Composer Porter
15 Cheap ride section
16 Memory method
17 "What's the —?"
18 Toxin
20 Annual athletic awards
23 Eve's man
24 — gin fizz
25 Sign after Libra
28 Lettuce variety
29 Packs away
30 "— Kapital"
32 Oater
34 Reactions to fireworks
35 Round bread of India
36 Hum-dingers
37 Make better
40 Cistern
41 Sandwich treat
42 Subject of medical research
47 Speech problem
48 Like some income
49 Minus
50 Score units (Abbr.)
51 Hanker-ings

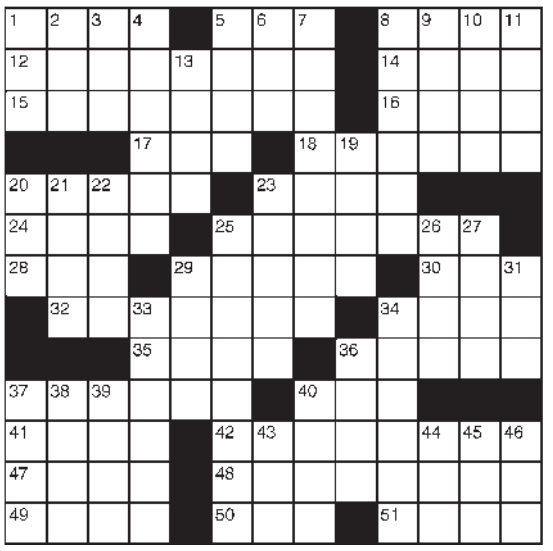
DOWN

1 Not neg.
2 Suitable
3 Numbered rd.
4 Make a colorful T-shirt
5 Chanteuse Edith
6 Flavor enhancer, for short
7 Resign
8 Pinch pennies
9 Courts
10 Sax range
11 Adolescent
13 Hosp. scans
19 Rowboat needs
20 PC key
21 Leisurely
22 Sit for a photo
23 Future oak
25 Fills with mist
26 Pedestal occupant
27 Pearl Harbor site
29 Luminary
31 Snake's warning
33 Nosy people
34 Vehement protest
36 Tibetan monk
37 Hot dog holder
38 Buffalo's lake
39 Own (up)
40 Geese formations
43 Potent stick
44 Away from WSW
45 Author Deighton
46 Mormon church, for short

Solution time: 26 mins.

C	M	A	■	H	J	_	A	■	H	I	V	E
E	C	N	■	O	D	I	N	■	A	C	E	D
M	O	N	O	T	O	N	Y	■	W	E	R	E
■	■	A	D	E	N	■	■	A	A	R	O	N
M	O	R	E	L	■	D	E	S	I	■	■	■
A	B	B	A	■	C	U	S	H	I	O	N	V
R	O	C	■	S	H	A	P	E	■	_	I	J
C	E	R	E	M	O	N	Y	■	M	I	C	K
■	■	■	D	U	P	E	■	P	A	V	E	S
S	P	R	I	G	■	■	C	E	C	E	■	■
G	L	O	B	■	S	Y	M	P	H	O	N	V
T	F	I	I	■	I	A	O	S	■	I	B	F
S	A	L	E	■	O	M	N	I	■	_	A	P

Last Friday's Answer 09/14



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jimmy Butler, 31; Dilshad Vadsaria, 35; Andrew Lincoln, 47; Robert Herjavec, 58.

Happy Birthday: A desire for change will tempt you to move or rethink your direction this year. Take your time, and evaluate each scenario with discretion. Impulsiveness and stubbornness will be your downfall if you let emotions be your barometer for change and new beginnings. Be proactive, and make decisions based on what's best for you and the ones you love. Your numbers are 5, 13, 17, 22, 27, 35, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Mental, physical and emotional stimulation will help you release pent-up energy and encourage you to bypass potential conflicts. Concentrate on what's important, not trivial matters or those who don't share your values. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take your time. If you act in haste, you will end up having to backtrack. Monitor situations carefully, and avoid taking a risk that can affect your physical or emotional well-being. Stick to a practical plan, and finish what you start. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Look inward; consider what makes you happy. Strive to spend more time with the people you love and to take better care of yourself and your surroundings. A positive change at home will encourage good health and relationships with family. Romance is highlighted. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* The past will help you make better decisions as you move forward. Consider how you can apply what you learn to achieve peace of mind. Use your imagination, and look for ideas that are current and easy to incorporate into your daily routine. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Be diplomatic. How you handle situations will determine the type of changes you encounter. Problems will arise at work if you aren't adaptable. Look for a way to work with whatever comes your way. Make personal growth a priority. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Look for the truth, question your motives and pursue what's most important. Positive changes at home will open your eyes to possibilities. Make moves for the right reason, and you will get the results you desire. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Search for the truth. Whether you question your motives or someone else's, it's essential to feel comfortable with the decisions you make. Don't spend on something you don't need. Impulsive actions will lead to regret. Focus on peace and love. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Explore your options, and learn all you can about the people you are dealing with and the projects you want to pursue. Don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone if it will help you bring about positive change. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Look for financial opportunities, tie up pending legal matters or contracts, and don't take risks with your health. Channel time and energy into fitness and taking better care of yourself, your loved ones and money. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪✪

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		6	4	5	3			
		4			1		6	
9	1						3	
3			8					6
4	9						7	8
2					4			5
	4						5	1
		2		6		9		
			9	4	5	2		

Difficulty Level ★ 9/14

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

6	2	3	1	9	7	5	4	8
7	8	5	3	6	4	9	2	1
4	9	1	5	8	2	6	7	3
9	1	7	6	5	3	4	8	2
2	3	6	8	4	9	7	1	5
5	4	8	2	7	1	3	6	9
3	6	9	7	2	8	1	5	4
1	5	2	4	3	6	8	9	7
8	7	4	9	1	5	2	3	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Rely on experience when it comes time to make a decision. Don't be fooled by someone's charm or give in to persuasive tactics that tempt you to spend or do something you shouldn't. Concentrate on gaining stability and making home improvements. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Pull everything together, and put an end to pending matters. You'll gain insight into where you stand and how you can move forward without jeopardizing your position, reputation or status due to a change someone makes. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Don't fight a change regarding how you earn your living. Reluctance to move forward with the changes going on around you will hold you back. Embrace the future, and etch out your place in the current market. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are charming, sensitive and impulsive. You are persistent and imaginative. *Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn. Copyright 2020 Andrews McMeel Syndication*

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SECTIONALS Solution: 10 letters

D	B	A	N	R	E	N	I	L	C	E	R	S	N
E	E	E	Y	O	L	I	L	F	O	A	M	R	E	D
D	N	S	L	O	V	W	O	O	L	I	O	E	E	E
L	C	T	O	M	Y	B	C	U	O	L	D	D	R	L
O	H	H	N	P	A	L	D	I	O	S	D	I	U	G
M	E	E	N	T	R	O	I	C	R	E	E	L	T	N
B	D	T	T	D	M	U	C	M	R	B	G	S	I	A
R	A	I	H	O	E	O	P	H	A	M	A	O	N	O
E	N	C	T	G	M	T	S	I	A	F	N	F	R	D
G	T	S	K	F	I	N	A	X	T	A	I	A	U	I
E	U	A	O	L	G	A	I	R	T	L	S	X	F	V
C	F	R	T	I	E	M	R	U	A	L	U	O	E	I
A	T	I	S	E	I	S	R	T	E	P	M	M	V	D
P	E	E	L	Z	C	A	S	E	S	N	E	D	O	E
S	D	T	E	L	L	A	P	I	E	C	E	S	M	D

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Acetate, Aesthetics, Angled, Backless, Batting, Benched, Colors, Comfort, Custom, Dens, Designs, Divided, Fabric, Family, Fill, Fixed, Foam, Furniture, Loose, Maximize, Modular, Molded, Move, Multipurposed, Natural, Needs, Nylon, Pallet, Pieces, Recliner, Room, Separated, Shredded, Sleep, Sliders, Sofa, Space, Straight, Tufted, Wool

Last Friday's Answer: Personality

To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Lakers finish off Rockets, reach West finals

FLORIDA (AP)—The Los Angeles Lakers are going to the conference finals for the first time in a decade, ending the longest drought in franchise history.

LeBron James is going there for the first time since 2018. For him, that also qualifies as ending a drought.

James scored 29 points and the Lakers wrapped up their first trip to the Western Conference finals since 2010 by topping the Houston Rockets 119-96 on Saturday night in Game 5 at Walt Disney World.

"It's the reason I wanted to be a part of this franchise, to take them back to a place that they were accustomed to being—and that's competing for a championship," James said. "It's an honor for me to wear the purple and gold, and for us, we just try to continue the legacy."

Kyle Kuzma scored 17 points, Markieff Morris had 16, Danny Green added 14 and Anthony Davis finished with 13 for the top-seeded Lakers. They will play either the second-seeded Los Angeles Clippers or third-seeded Denver Nuggets for the West title in a series that won't begin before Wednesday.

James is going to the conference finals for the 11th time overall -- six with Cleveland, four with Miami and now with the Lakers. It's his ninth time getting to this round in the last 10 seasons; the one miss in that stretch was last season, when his inaugural year with the Lakers fell apart because of injury and the team missed the playoffs.

"The opportunity to play for a championship, that's what we're all here for, that's what we all signed up for," James said.

James Harden scored 30 points, Jeff Green scored 13 and Russell Westbrook had 10 for Houston.

"Tough season for us," Harden said. "Obviously, it didn't end like we wanted it to. Just got to figure it out."

And now that the offseason is here, the speculation about coach Mike D'Antoni's future will ramp up. His contract with the Rockets is now complete, the sides couldn't agree on terms of any extension a year ago, and he's been mentioned as a candidate for the vacancies in Indiana and Philadelphia.

"We've got a great organization, great city, great fans, team's great," D'Antoni said. "I mean, everything's good here. We'll see what happens, but I couldn't ask for a better situation. I had four years and hopefully it keeps going. You just never know."

It was a tough end to a tough week for the Rockets.

Westbrook exchanged heated words with a fan in the family section during the fourth quarter; NBA security asked the man, identified by ESPN as a brother of Lakers guard Rajon Rondo, to leave the game.

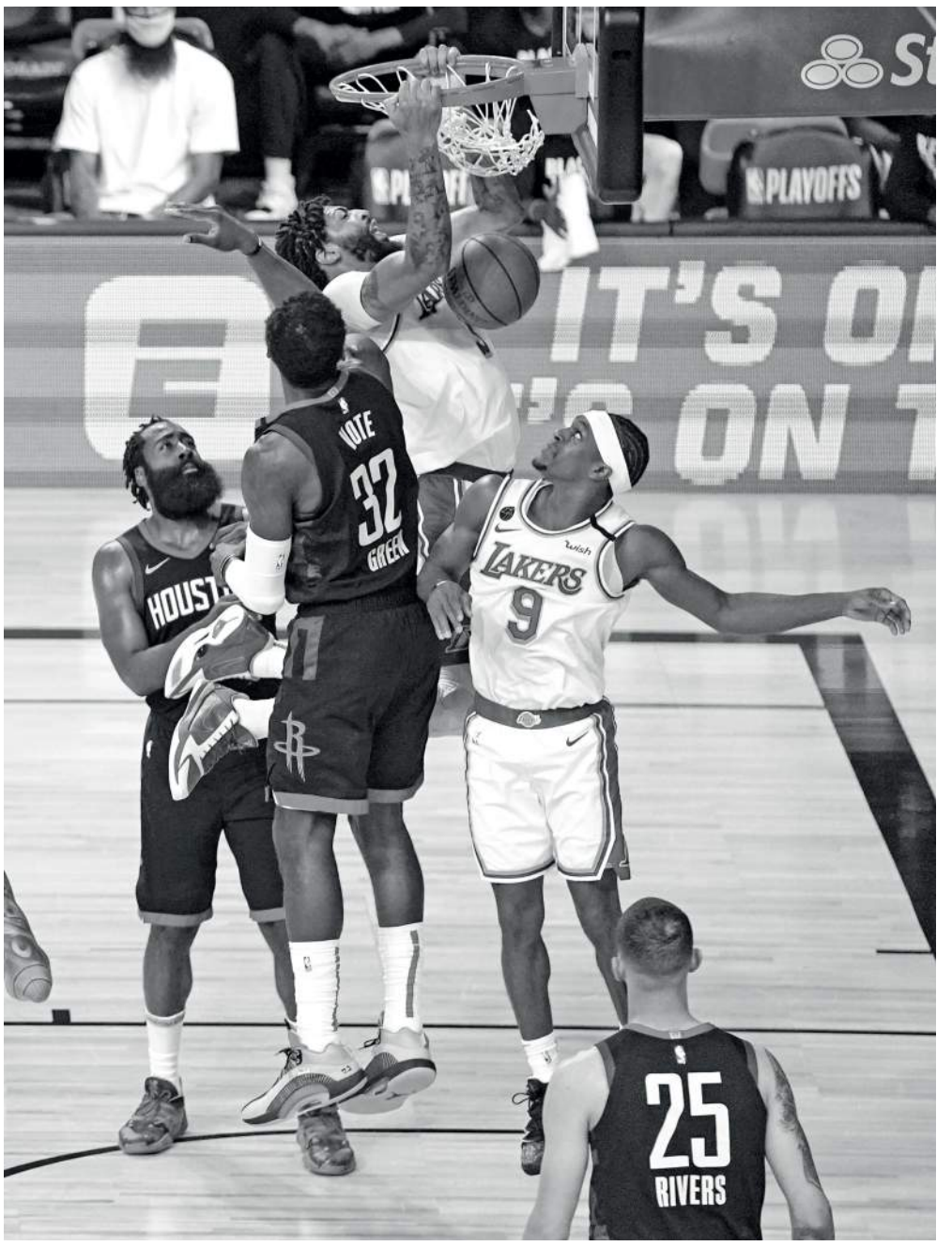
"He started talking crazy," Westbrook said. "I don't play that game."

Houston won Game 1 of the series and lost the next four. Saturday's finale came a day after Danuel House—who averaged 11.4 points in nine playoff games this season -- was told to leave the bubble. An NBA investigation showed he had an unauthorized guest in his room for several hours earlier this week, and he missed the last three games of the series.

"It affected us," Harden said, who called the situation disappointing.

Clippers try again

Doc Rivers is fully aware of the adage that says the hardest games to win in the NBA are the ones where one team can end another's season.



AP

Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis, top, dunks against the Houston Rockets during the second half of an NBA conference semifinal playoff game Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

He'd like to amend that theory.

"Just winning a game in the NBA is hard," the Los Angeles Clippers' coach said.

For the Clippers, winning a game at this point in the season has been impossible—forever. The franchise that spent decades best described as woebegone has never reached the conference finals, now 0-6 in games where they could clinch a spot in that round after losing to Denver in Game 5 of their Western Conference semifinal series.

Game 6 is Sunday, when the Clippers will once again try to get to a level of the playoffs that they've never reached before. They'll take a 3-2 series lead into the matchup, after wasting a 15-point second-half lead and falling 111-105 to the Nuggets in Game 5.

"We gave a game up," Clippers forward Paul George said. "Game 6, we've got to come in and put them away. That's the emphasis in the series, Game 6. We've got to do our job and do our job better."

Kawhi Leonard's 3-pointer with 1:25 left in the third put the Clippers up 80-67. They got outscored 44-25 the rest of the way, shooting 7 for 27 in that span while Denver was 7 for 9 from 3-point range and 12 for 19 from the floor overall in those minutes.

The Nuggets are now 4-0 when facing elimination this season, after rallying from 3-1 down against Utah in the first round. No NBA franchise has ever pulled off a pair of 3-1 comebacks in the same decade, much less the same season, but Denver still has life.

Giannis meets with Bucks owners to discuss future

FLORIDA—Milwaukee Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo met with ownership Saturday afternoon to discuss the future of the franchise, league sources said.

Last season's MVP and this year's Defensive Player of the Year met privately with co-owner Marc Lasry, sources added.

The meeting came on the same day the 6-foot-11 star unfollowed hundreds on Twitter and Instagram, including the Bucks' team account and his teammates' accounts.

Antetokounmpo, 25, has a year remaining on his contract, and he is eligible for a super-max extension this offseason that is expected to be worth around $254 million over five years. He could opt to play the final year of his deal before making a decision on his long-term future.

The Bucks were eliminated last week in five games by the Miami Heat in the second round of the playoffs. After the game, Antetokounmpo told Yahoo Sports he wouldn't be requesting a trade.

"Some see a wall and go in [another direction]. I plow through it," he said. "We just have to get better as a team, individually and get right back at it next season."

The Bucks are committed to building and sustaining a championship roster around Antetokounmpo and are expected to be one of the busiest teams this offseason.

Rival teams are closely monitoring the situation.

Celtics lean on young core

Marcus Smart is 26. Jaylen Brown is 23. Jayson Tatum is 22.

The Boston Celtics aren't old, by any measure.

That doesn't mean they are lacking for experience—or don't already know what it's like to play in the Eastern Conference finals.

Smart and Brown are going there for the third time in four years, Tatum for the second time in his three seasons, and they're bringing Kemba Walker along for his first view of what the conference-final stage looks like. The Celtics held off reigning champion Toronto 92-87 in Game 7 of their East semifinal series Friday night, earning a trip to the East title series against the Miami Heat.

"We have three 30-year-olds," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "We're basically a college team with a couple of guys.

"You know, it's funny. I talk all the time about, you're only scrutinized if you're in the arena. And Jaylen and Jayson, this is all they've done. All they've done is play in, now it'll be three Eastern Conference finals for Jaylen and two for Jayson. And they've been in this stage and they've been huge parts of it. They are young in every metric except playoff experience. They have a lot of it."

They're about to get more.

Game 1 is Tuesday, Game 2 is Thursday and Game 3 next Saturday. The rest of the series could follow the every-other-day format; that'll be determined once the Western Conference semifinal series are done and that matchup finalized.

The Celtics are looking for their first NBA Finals trip since 2010. They've been to the East finals three times since, losing to Miami in 2012 and Cleveland in 2017 and 2018—meaning LeBron James thwarted them all three of those times.

"We didn't come down here just for the first or second round," Tatum said. "We didn't really pay attention to outside noise, whether we were favored or not. We know what we're capable of and we're just going to go out there and do it."

The Celtics could be getting another big part of who they are back at some point in the East finals. Gordon Hayward sprained his right ankle in the playoff opener against Philadelphia; he did some shooting before the game Friday, a sign that he's working toward a return. ***(AP/NBC)***

Osaka rallies for 2nd US Open title

AP
Naomi Osaka of Japan returns a shot to Victoria Azarenka of Belarus during the women's singles final of the US Open tennis championships, Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020, in New York.

NEW YORK (AP)—After one errant forehand in the first set of the U.S. Open final, Naomi Osaka looked at her coach in the mostly empty Arthur Ashe Stadium stands with palms up, as if to say, "What the heck is happening?"

In response to another wayward forehand against Victoria Azarenka seconds later, Osaka chucked her racket. It spun a bit and rattled against the court.

Surprisingly off-kilter in the early going Saturday, Osaka kept missing shots and digging herself a deficit. Until, suddenly, she lifted her game, and Azarenka couldn't sustain her start. By the end, Osaka pulled away to a 1-6, 6-3, 6-3 victory for her second U.S. Open championship and third Grand Slam title overall.

"For me, I just thought," said Osaka, who trailed by a set and a break, "it would be very embarrassing to lose this in an under an hour."

This, then, is what she told herself with a white towel draped over her head at a changeover when things looked bleakest: "I just have to try as hard as I can and stop having a really bad attitude."

It worked. A quarter-century had passed since a woman who lost the first set of a U.S. Open final wound up winning: In 1994, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario did it against Steffi Graf.

"I wasn't really thinking about winning. I was just thinking about competing," Osaka said. "Somehow, I ended up with the trophy."

Osaka is a 22-year-old who was born in Japan to a Japanese mother and Haitian father; the family moved to the U.S. when she was 3.

Osaka, now based in California, arrived for the U.S. Open intent on claiming the championship, to be sure, but with another goal in mind, as well: continuing to be a voice for change by calling attention to racial injustice.

She showed up for Saturday's match wearing a mask with the name of Tamir Rice, a Black 12-year-old boy killed by police in Ohio in 2014. That was the seventh mask she'd used during the tournament, after honoring other Black victims of violence: Breonna Taylor, Elijah McClain, Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and Philando Castile.

"The point," Osaka explained, "is to make people start talking."

Last month, Osaka refused to compete after the police shooting of a Black man, Jacob Blake, in Wisconsin—she said she would withdraw from her semifinal at the Western & Southern Open, although decided to play after the tournament took a full day off in solidarity.

Osaka and her coach, Wim Fissette—who used to work with Azarenka—have said they think the off-court activism has helped her energy and mindset in matches.

"I wanted," Osaka said, "more people to (see) more names."

So perhaps it was no coincidence that this win over Azarenka, a 31-year-old from Belarus also seeking a third Grand Slam title but first in 7½ years, made Osaka 11-0 since tennis resumed after its hiatus because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Osaka added to her triumphs at the 2018 U.S. Open—earned with a brilliant performance in a memorably chaotic and controversial final against Serena Williams—and 2019 Australian Open.

Azarenka carried an 11-match winning streak of her own into Saturday, including a stirring three-set victory over Williams in the semifinals, stopping the American's bid for a 24th Grand Slam title.

Azarenka won the 2012 and 2013 Australian Opens and lost to Williams in the U.S. Open finals each of those years.

"I thought the third time was the charm," Azarenka said, "but I guess I'll have to try again."

Even after Osaka surged ahead 4-1 in the third set, the outcome was unclear. Azarenka drew to 4-3, then stood and stretched during the ensuing changeover.

"Had a little bit of a energy dip," Azarenka said.

Osaka regained control, then laid down on the court when the final was over.

Yanks nip Orioles in 10, widen lead for playoff spot

NEW YORK (AP)—Luke Voit hit a game-ending sacrifice fly leading off the 10th inning, and the New York Yankees beat Baltimore 2-1 Saturday to open a 4 1/2-game lead over the Orioles for the American League's eighth and final playoff berth.

With DJ LeMahieu starting the inning as the automatic runner on second, Hunter Harvey (0-2) bounced a wild pitch that advanced LeMahieu. Baltimore brought the field in.

Voit, hitting in shadows, worked the count to 2-2, fouled off three pitches and hit a fly ball to center fielder Cedric Mullins for his 37th RBI. LeMahieu scored without a throw.

A day after sweeping a doubleheader from the Orioles, New York (25-21) won its fourth straight game and closed in on Toronto (24-20) for second place in the AL East. Trying to rebound from a 5-16 slump, the Yankees are on their longest winning streak since taking six in a row from Aug. 11-17.

Astros 7, Dodgers 5

Alex Bregman singled in the go-ahead run during a five-run ninth inning, and the Astros rallied past the Los Angeles Dodgers under smoky skies Saturday night in Houston's first visit since the infamous 2017 World Series.

The Dodgers blew a three-run lead in the ninth when Kenley Jansen (3-1) got knocked around, giving up four consecutive hits without an out.

White Sox 14, Tigers 0

Jose Abreu hit two three-run homers and matched a career high with seven RBI, and the White Sox earned their eighth straight win against the Tigers.

Abreu went 4 for 4 a day after his career-best 22-game hitting streak ended. It was the longest streak in the majors this season.

Cubs 4, Brewers 2

Jason Heyward hit a three-run homer off Josh Hader in the ninth inning, sending the Cubs to the victory.

NL Central-leading Chicago had gone scoreless for 17 straight innings before breaking through against Hader.

Twins 8, Indians 4

Byron Buxton homered for the second straight night for the Twins, and Rich Hill got his first win since July.

Minnesota won for the ninth time in 11 games since it closed August with a six-game slide. It remained a game back of the AL Central-leading White Sox.

Blue Jays 3, Mets 2

Bo Bichette singled and scored in a successful return to the Toronto lineup and Alejandro Kirk also got a hit and scored in his big league debut.

Bichette, who missed 27 games with a right knee sprain, was activated from the injured list and extended his hitting streak to 10 games.

Braves 2, Nationals 1

Rookie Ian Anderson pitched seven scoreless innings, and the NL East-leading Braves held on for the win after Mark Melancon escaped a bases-loaded jam in the ninth.

In his fourth career start, Anderson (3-0) allowed one hit, struck out nine and walked three.

Rays 5, Red Sox 4

Brandon Lowe and Austin Meadows homered, powering the AL East-leading Rays to the victory.

Lowe hit a solo drive off Marcus Walden (0-2) in the seventh for a 5-4 lead.

Tyler Glasnow (3-1) pitched seven innings for Tampa Bay, which is a combined 15-4 against Boston and the New York Yankees.

Rangers 5, Athletics 2, Game 1
Athletics 10, Rangers 1, Game 2

Marcus Semien drove in four runs, Chris Bassitt struck out eight over six innings and Oakland earned a doubleheader split.

In the opener, Rougned Odor and Ronald Guzman homered during Texas' five-run first inning, and the Rangers spoiled Daulton Jefferies' major league debut.

Phillies 12, Marlins 6

Bryce Harper homered, doubled and reached five times, leading Philadelphia to the victory.

Harper, who snapped a 1-for-10 funk, also singled and walked twice as the Phillies evened their seven-game series with Miami at 2-2.

Cardinals 7, Reds 1

Dakota Hudson allowed just one hit in six innings, and the Cardinals backed the right-hander with four home runs.

Harrison Bader hit a three-run homer and Matt Carpenter and Paul Goldschmidt added solo drives in the sixth as the Cardinals broke it open.

Royals 7, Pirates 4

Kansas City's Adalberto Mondesi homered and stole a base for the third consecutive game, and Kyle Zimmer got his first career win.

Whit Merrifield also connected for the Royals in their fifth straight victory.

Mariners 7, Diamondbacks 3

Ty France and Jose Marmolejos homered, Justus Sheffield pitched seven quality innings and the Mariners snapped a three-game losing streak.

The Mariners jumped out to a 4-0 lead in the first inning against Zac Gallen.

Angels 5, Rockies 2, 11 innings

Rookie Jared Walsh homered for the fourth straight game, hitting a three-run drive with two outs in the 11th inning to lift Los Angeles over Colorado.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	30	16	.652	0.0
Toronto	25	20	.556	4.5
NY Yankees	25	21	.543	5.0
Baltimore	20	25	.444	9.5
Boston	16	31	.340	14.5
Central				
Chi White Sox	29	16	.644	0.0
Minnesota	29	18	.617	1.0
Cleveland	26	20	.565	3.5
Detroit	20	25	.444	9.0
Kansas City	19	28	.404	11.0
West				
Oakland	29	16	.644	0.0
Houston	23	23	.500	6.5
Seattle	20	25	.444	9.0
LA Angels	19	28	.404	11.0
Texas	16	30	.348	13.5

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East				
Atlanta	27	19	.587	0.0
Philadelphia	23	20	.535	2.5
Miami	21	21	.500	4.0
NY Mets	21	25	.457	6.0
Washington	17	27	.386	9.0
Central				
Chi Cubs	27	20	.574	0.0
St. Louis	20	19	.513	3.0
Milwaukee	20	23	.465	5.0
Cincinnati	20	26	.435	6.5
Pittsburgh	14	29	.326	11.0
West				
LA Dodgers	32	14	.696	0.0
San Diego	29	17	.630	3.0
San Francisco	23	22	.511	8.5
Colorado	21	24	.467	10.5
Arizona	17	30	.362	15.5

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brady vs Brees is tastiest of NFL matchups

TAMPA BAY (AP) — How sweet it can be.

In the first matchup of 40-plus quarterbacks in NFL annals, during one of the most anticipated openers the league has seen—though it won't be seen by fans at the Superdome because of the coronavirus pandemic—Tom Brady makes his Buccaneers debut against that youngster Drew Brees and the Saints.

For now, all those doubts about the NFL actually starting on time can be shoved aside as the sporting world savors these two QB codgers. They are the top two in yards and TDs passing, and it's the first game since 1998 (Dan Marino and John Elway) featuring the 1-2 career yards passing leaders.

The matchup brought Brees back—way back.

"It makes me remember back to 1999 when we played against each other in college," he said. "The Boilermakers traveled up to the Big House (Michigan Stadium). Unfortunately, that one didn't end too well for us, but I think, little did we know, we would have the opportunities that we've had in the NFL. I'm sure I speak for both of us when I say that, I think we both pinch ourselves, the blessing and the opportunity to be able to play this long, play for so many great teams and with so many great players."

Brady stuck to the cliches, uh, basics.

"I'm just happy to be playing and excited for the game this Sunday," Brady said. "We've got a great opponent. Drew's an incredible quarterback. We know they've got a great offense, but they've got a really talented defense, a lot of good young players, a lot of good veteran players. It's a good mix. It's a really sound scheme, so it's going to be a great football game."

AP

In this Oct.13, 2013 file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, left, talks with New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees after the Patriots beat the Saints, 30-27, in an NFL game in Foxborough, Mass.

The season opened Thursday night in Kansas City with the familiar sight of Patrick Mahomes effortlessly leading the Chiefs up and down the field. The Super Bowl MVP threw for 211 yards and three touchdowns, Clyde Edwards-Helaire ran through the rain for 138 yards and another score, and the Chiefs began defense of their first championship in 50 years by beating the Houston Texans 34-20.

49ers hopeful to be able to play opener

San Francisco coach Kyle Shanahan remains hopeful the 49ers will be able to play their season opener against Arizona as scheduled despite poor air quality caused by wildfires in Northern California.

The Niners practiced Friday at their facility as scheduled with an Air Quality Index between 150 and 200. NFL rules call for postponing or moving a game if the AQI is expected to remain consistently above 200 at the stadium on the day of the game.

"If it gets to 200, that's when the NFL will start really discussing what to do with the game," Shanahan said. "I don't think that's my decision at all. I know it's not, thank goodness. We'll see what happens. Hopefully, it won't get there. Hopefully, it will be safe, but got to see what the wind does."

RIP

From Page 20

happy forwards from 3-point territory.

Davis, meanwhile, is a guard trapped in a center's body. He actually started his basketball life as a point guard in high school before an 8-inch growth spurt made his height closer now to his officially listed height of 6'11". He avoids playing center like the plague, but had to due to JaVale McGee's unfavorable matchups in the series against the Rockets.

Houston's small ball lineup was also a bit flawed. The Rockets made a big splash during the offseason when they swapped all-star guard Chris Paul for former MVP Russel Westbrook. While CP3 isn't exactly known to light it up from the land of plenty, he's still a far more effective floor spacer than Brodie. It would've worked for lesser teams with Westbrook serving as Houston's de facto center on offense, but coach Frank Vogel's Lakers is an entirely different beast.

Against the Lakers, the 2017 regular season MVP just couldn't bully Davis and 6'8" LeBron James inside the paint, which meant LA's perimeter guys stayed home on Harden, P.J. Tucker, Robert Covington, Eric Gordon, Ben McLemore, and the rest of Houston's platoons of shooters, ultimately throwing a wrench in D'Antoni's small ball basketball philosophy.

The gentleman's sweep is a bitter pill to swallow for Houston general manager and analytics guy Daryl Morey, who went all in on D'Antoni's small ball system by jettisoning starting center Clint Capela before this season's NBA All-Star Game. The donut team barely scraped by the Thunder in the first round then were completely eviscerated by the Lakers in the second. As the old adage goes, height is still might in basketball and no amount of analytics would negate that fact. Former Memphis coach David Fizdale's infamous "Take that for data!" comment may be true after all.

As a result of their season ending abruptly, Houston might see an exodus of not only players but even D'Antoni himself, who is in the last year of his contract. The NBA's premier mad scientist will not be short on suitors as the":07 Seconds or Less" coach is already being rumored going to multiple coaching vacancies with the Indiana Pacers job his most likely destination.

The ill-fitting pair of old OKC teammates, The Beard and Brodie, may also be headed toward a divorce. However, that's easier said than done as Westbrook's contract is untradeable even before the pre-COVID-19 landscape of the NBA. There's no way Clutch City will part with Harden. The Rockets could still trade Brodie in a salary dump if it attaches draft picks in the deal, but wait Houston's future had already been mortgaged in the Chris Paul trade (first-round picks in 2024 and 2026 and the right to swap first-rounders in 2021 and 2025).

For a team with championship aspirations ever since acquiring LeBron (and even so after trading for AD), the Lakers hurdling the Lilliputian Rockets is not really a cause to celebrate, as there are bigger fish to fry for LA. Now they await the outcome of the series between the Paper Clips and upstart Denver Nuggets. Game 6 is today and I'm crossing my fingers that The Joker and company will pull off the win. That would setup a Game 7, the sweetest words in sports.

The Nuggets already overcame a 1-3 series deficit (first round against the Utah Jazz and my *kababayan* Jordan Clarkson) and who's to say they can't do it again against The Claw and the rest of the Clippers. While I never really liked Kawhi Leonard, I still hope that the Clippers emerge victorious against the Nuggets so basketball fans can finally be treated to a Battle of LA, 2020 edition.

HERNAEZ

From Page 20

"We have an amazing group of riders and MRA officials and members. Every time we have our Sunday event, it's like a family gathering with everyone enjoying the races, whether as spectators or rider themselves. It's really great to see motocross back on Saipan, especially for local riders who want to have the opportunity to do this kind of race," Hernaez added.

To encourage more people to try the sport, Hernaez volunteers to help fix dirt bikes. He also comes to the racetrack in full gear to show a good example to new riders or those interested in the sport.

"I know there are safety issues in motocross and in every sport, but if you wear proper gear, you will minimize the chances of getting yourself injured. You also have to keep practicing and always have confidence when riding to get better," Hernaez said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Angelo Hernaez poses for a photo at the Banzai Cliff after a practice ride.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In this undated photo, Angelo Hernaez competes in one of the motocross races in the Philippines.

The father of two will continue to join MRA's practice rides in Marpi and hopes to get a chance to officially compete in races on Saipan, as their group works on securing a permanent racetrack (the same area where CowTown is located).

"While waiting for that day, I need to work on my stamina. I can do two laps, but on my third, it's a different story. I will need more jogging and pushup time, LOL, to be able to compete well with the fast riders on Saipan."

Lakers finish off Rockets, reach West finals

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Hernaez keeps passion for motocross

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Angelo Hernaez is airborne after negotiating one of the hills along the Kan Pacific course during the Marianas Racing Association's exhibition races this month.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Marianas Racing Association member Angelo Hernaez may have tried other sports on Saipan, but he never lost interest in motocross.

Even when motocross on island was still in a lull, Hernaez used to bring his bike up north and practiced on his own. Now that MRA is reviving motocross, the Chalan Kanoa resident has all the reason to stick with the he sport he fell in love with growing up in the Philippines.

"I learned how to ride when I was 10 years old. During festivities in my hometown (South Cotabato in Mindanao), there were motocross races and I enjoyed watching them so that's how I developed interest in the sport and joined the beginners class with my small bike [85 cc], " said the 36-year-old rider.

When he turned 17, Hernaez started participating in competitive races in the Philippines. Then when he moved to Saipan late 2000s, he was hoping to join similar events, but the CowTown Raceway was already closed then. Still, Hernaez, who also played in basketball and darts leagues on Saipan, utilized his weekend riding his bike and navigating through the dirt roads on island.

"I guess, if motocross or any sport is in your heart, no matter what happens, you will stay with it. Personally, I feel so different every time I ride my bike and jump over the obstacles along the course, plus it motivates me to stay in shape so I can work my way up those bumps," Hernaez said.

The LSG Sky Chef employee rides his old, but reliable RMZ250 (2005 model) every time he joins MRA's practice races on weekends in Marpi (the Kan Pacific Pool area) and is happy to be part of the group he considers family.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Angelo Hernaez takes a breather after a long ride up north.

MARKSMAN
By MARK RABAGO
Associate Editor

Growing up Mark wanted to play pro basketball. When his talent and height didn't measure up, he opted for a career in journalism instead.

RIP small ball

The Karl Anthony Towns, Rudy Goberts, and Joel Embiids of the world could rest easy now as centers are not entirely extinct in the NBA.

If there's anything the Lakers' 4-1 win against the Houston Rockets in their semifinal round of the Western Conference proved is that small ball is still not viable, especially in the playoffs.

The gimmicky Don Nelson creation may have seemingly worked for coach Mike D'Antoni in the regular season (they did finish fourth in the Western Conference), but come the postseason when opposing coaches have an entire series to counteract the Rockets' pace-and-space schemes, there's just no way small ball can overcome teams with skilled big men.

You can say James Harden and company got lucky escaping the Oklahoma City in the first round as unlike Anthony Davis, the Thunder's starting center is Steven Adams. The 7'0" Kiwi is more of a traditional big man, bruising with heavy feet and not really adept to chasing the Rockets' trigger-

See RIP on Page 19

AP
Houston Rockets' Russell Westbrook reaches for a loose ball against the Los Angeles Lakers during the second half of an NBA conference semifinal playoff game Thursday, Sept. 10, 2020, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.